

[Written for The Flag of our Union.]

"WALNUT RIDGE." A STRANGE GHOST STORY.

BY HARRY HAREWOOD LEECH.

CHAPTER I.

A NEW LIFE. WANTED—A FARM.

RICHARD T. PEMBROKE he wrote his name, but all his companions called him Dick Pembroke, and he was just the merriest, handsomest, wittiest beau in New York, but by no means a conceited fopling was Dick; but just vain enough to dress in the best taste, in the height of fashion to show off his elegant figure, to play the gallant sufficiently to fascinate all the belles, and to lounge into *le foyer* of The Academy, with that nonchalant ease, which made his conyists ready to strangle themselves with envy. He was the embodiment of that strange species—the fashionable young man of the Nineteenth Century. His parents had died while he was young, leaving him upon his majority the recipient of a large fortune. His guardians, fond, foolish men, thought that their charge could not receive an education befitting a gentleman in America, so they must needs send him to a foreign school—somewhere near Chester, England—a course which in our own experience we have observed has confirmed many who were fools before, and perpetuated a race of pompous blockheads to bore simple-minded people with their (said blockheads') insufferable stupidity. But in the case of Dick Pembroke he had so much native goodness, and his heart was so large and genial, and his early remembrances of his dear home in New York were so vivid, that even after he had graduated in England, and travelled extensively upon the continent, he returned to his native country with that pleasure which is only known to the returned wanderer; and although by his travels his prejudices were conquered, his notions were enlarged, his views extended, and many useful sciences learned, which books can never teach or pedants show, still he never verified Cowper's lines in the famous *Progress of Error*,

"How much a dunce, that has been sent to roam,
 Excels a dunce that has been kept at home."

Richard Pembroke was just twenty-five. And his experiences had been large for a man of that age. Educated, travelled, wealthy, handsome, whole-hearted and witty, it is not to be wondered at, that he was a lion in the select circles in which he moved, and many were the delicious snares which beauty set for this *rara avis*, but in which the wily bird never was entrapped. And at the age of twenty-five, Richard Pembroke was as heart-free as any young, handsome man of the world can be, who has passed before the witching batteries of dark eyes, smiling lips, tender, bewildering hand-pressings and surreptitious foot-tappings, and yet not to have surrendered at discretion. Had Dick Pembroke been merely a selfish, courted man of fashion who indulged in rich attire, extravagant flirtations, luxurious living and expensive friends, he might still to this day have been nothing more; but as he had a vein of good judgment and common sense permeating his lighter character, like a vein of rich quartz through a barren hillside, he all at once awoke to the consciousness that he was leading, if not a wicked, at least an aimless life, and he determined while yet in life's morning to cast off the enervating pleasures and sycophantic, useless friends which he had indulged himself with; the former he had used to kill time, the latter to assist him in doing it.

He now was forming new resolves how he should commence the better life which he was determined to inaugurate. Should he travel again? O, no! at least, not yet, for he thought of the desires he once had to reach his home and friends; besides this, there were wanting those bright imaginings with which we are wont to invest the ideas of a visit to the Old World, and which he, having torn aside the veil of romance, could not deck his thoughts again with such sweet, illusive, gauzy drapery; all was real—as it was. Should he devote himself to some science, and poring over musty books, and experimenting with strange chemicals, develop and discover to the world some wonderful agent which should be hailed with delight by the economists of nations? No, no! not that. Should he turn author? Write a book of travels? No! every fool who can find a publisher does that. Should he turn to that noblest first occupation of man—farming—the tilling of the soil?

"Make his corn and cattle his only care
 And his supreme delight a country fair!"

And then he thought of the substantial, quiet pleasures of such a life, the health from labor springing, and then the perfect contentment

which would open the source of every joy—far from the world's jarring bustle free, amid the scented fields. He thought of all these things, and his cheeks glowed more ruddily with the thoughts; he smiled as though he almost felt the sweet, odorous breezes wafted towards him over banks of sweet flowers and the stacks of new mown hay, and gathering some of the musical murmurs of the tiny brooks over which it sweeps towards him, with soft caresses flinging his long brown hair over his firmer cheeks, his brighter eyes. He almost shouted—here then was something to imagine, here then was real joy. His choice was made. He would buy a farm, and whilst he might indulge in all his intellectual pleasures, he would be a *worker*. Glorious thought! at last one of the world's workers.

But Dick Pembroke was hard to please in the choice of a homestead; he had pictured to himself a charming cottage-built house, almost smothered with creeping vines and flowers, situated upon a slight eminence, where rich sloping fields should delight the eye upon every side, a murmuring brook meandering through mysterious avenues of pines, and a broad river to be seen in the distance, over whose waters he could skim with his fairy-like yacht on the warm summer afternoons. But this kind of a home it was difficult to find. Of course, in the advertisements of the New York papers, there were scores of such for sale, with every natural beauty improved by the art and taste of man, where the fields were so rich and productive, and the yearly increase so large, that new buildings had to be constantly erected to store the golden grain, and stack the sweet-hay and sheaved straw; but upon inspection, these model farms would dwindle down into very profitless, impoverished estates. The modern built house with all the latest "improvements," would become a crazy tumble-down tenement, with props to keep the structure from falling. The "commodious and extensive out-buildings" would be exceedingly primitive in structure, consisting for the most part of stakes driven into the ground, upon which dilapidated rails were laid for joists, upon which cedar boughs were heaped for an inexpensive roof, which would form "extensive cow sheds," around a log barn which would look to have been built specially for a rat harbor, instead of a protection and comfort for such useful animals as horses. "The wells of fine spring water were oftentimes situated in not very romantic dells, the locality approached through dark, luxurious grass, disagreeably suggesting the idea of snakes, and the croaking inhabitants of the springs seemed to intimate by their absolute possession, that they were not frequently stirred up. The "rich meadow lands" were oftentimes unmitigated marshes, and the "salubrious healthy country" was celebrated for that very common but decidedly unromantic disease, "the ague and fever," with the painful consciousness predominating, that you could not possibly take a walk out, but what you were sure to meet a rueful-looking neighbor, who would dismally inform you that "It was his day!" and who after having religiously received "his sweat" was preparing with an indescribable, calm, but (in those districts) usual philosophy to go to work again.

After myriad experiences of this order, Richard Pembroke was quite disgusted in looking after "places," and although not one jot abating his enthusiasm, he determined to bide his time, and not rashly purchase for the purpose of settling; but fate determined for him what he found so difficult to decide for himself. He received a rattling note from his volatile friend, Harry Marshall, who had forsaken city life long before, and was then leading a farmer's life in a picturesque portion of Maryland. Harry's letter, having exhausted all the gossip of his neighborhood, thus concluded:

—"But, my dear fellow, I never was happier in my life; to you, who are enjoying all the pleasures of a gay, city life, I say that there is nothing nobler, more soul-satisfying, than the independent, healthy pursuit of this 'first occupation.' It may seem proxy to you, it is heaven to me. I know you must be dreadfully wearied with your operas, Champagne suppers, insipid dinners, ceaseless flirtations and fruitless toilets; I have had a chance to try both, and ten thousand to one, I select this. 'I miss oftentimes the companionship of yourself and a few other choice friends, but I know you are not complimented when I say I solace myself with my 'imported' Durhams, rare 'Southdowns' and Chester and Chian hogs; but to be serious, come down and pay me a visit next week. I can't promise you a feast worthy of Apicius, such as Delmonico or that dear Mullet at the club house used to set us, but I will not be such a pagan as to doom you to interminable fitches of bacon—but Aunt Marty shall exercise her best powers to produce you her lightest omelettes and patties, her most ravishing pancakes and incomparable jellies. Come, and although I cannot ask the gay Spratt or the witty Natt to meet you, whose *bon mots* shall sparkle as we sip our wine (I have some genuine Ommatagn left yet) I can at least guarantee you good John Furrow, who is great on ditches, and modest Samuel Beech, our great oracle for early vegetables, and perhaps dovetail in the party, Amalek Ward, who drinks nothing but whiskey, and manages always to be drunk after soup. And then, I do not despair of making you a neighbor of mine besides—there is a charming old farm here, called the 'Dairy' (I hate the name, for everybody has the 'Dairy'), which is for sale. I know you will fall in love with the quaint, old Revolutionary house, so I want you to stuff the fine linen and broadcloth, don your homely woollens, and come look after your estate—"

Thus chatted Harry Marshall to his friend, and the next train Dick Pembroke was en route for Maryland; but he had a plan of his own in view, and he did not intend to spoil it by acquainting his friend Marshall with it—but he was determined to see this "Dairy," and perhaps present himself to his delighted friend as his near neighbor. He therefore travelled quietly to Maryland, and was conveyed from the railroad station nearly to his destination by stage, the driver of which was one of those chatty, companionable fellows who seem born just to fill such stations, from whom he learned all about the country, the farmers, the crops and a good deal about his old friend Marshall.

"Why, sir, d'ye see Mr. Marshall," the driver would say, "he just makes the best farmer for a gentleman, in all these parts. It would do you good to see his machines—"

"Machines!" from Pembroke, wondering.
"Yes, sir. His mowers, corn-shellers, seed-sowers, and—"
"O yes, yes! But tell me," Pembroke suddenly exclaimed, as they drove by a fine old wood, and could see a large house and extensive white-washed outbuildings in the distance, "what farm is that?"
"O, that's nothing, sir."
"Nothing?" asked his interlocutor, with surprise.
"No, sir, only Walnut Ridge—the other's the farm."
"Why, what do you mean? Surely that is a very pretty place, and there looks to be considerable land about it."
"Well, sir, you see the Dairy Farm yonder, with the big brick house on the hill there, that is a tract, sir, of over a thousand acres, and Walnut Ridge is only a little slice now—but it is a sad story, sir," added the driver, with a good deal of feeling.
"What is that?" asked Pembroke, curiously, and not a little amused at the man's lugubrious countenance.
"Why, sir, old Gaybrooke—he used to be Colonel Gaybrooke when he lived in the big house—owned the whole of the Dairy at one time, and lived like a gentleman. O, sir, I remember when the house was crowded with lots of company from Baltimore—there was driving and riding, hunting foxes and duck shooting, parties and suppers, no end to 'em, and the old colonel was as courtly as a king, everybody liked him, and he had the best lot of niggers in Harford, and the farm was like a garden-plot, it was, sir. Well, all at once it was whispered the old man was in trouble, that he had signed notes for other people which he had to pay. Then he tried to sell part of the estate, and as money was very scarce then, he could not raise enough by this means. Well, it was advised that he should sell off a few head of his niggers, but the old man loved them too much for that, and he said 'his boys should have a home while he had one.' But Gaybrooke grew sadder and sadder, and he commenced to neglect the place; the fences tumbled down and weren't put up again, and the Dairy wasn't half-cropped. To make a long story short, the sheriff at last got hold of everything, and the whole place was bought for a song, and they soon after moved to Walnut Ridge, just at the end there of the estate. The man who purchased the farm soon moved upon it with his family, but they didn't stay there long, for they declared it was haunted, that footsteps could be heard all over the house at night, and windows slamming awful."
And the driver's eyes got bigger as he was telling it.
"Since then these folks have been trying to sell it, sir, but nobody will live there. But it's a great pity for the old place to go down so, and more, for that matter, for poor old Gaybrooke and his daughter."
"Daughter—ah, he has a daughter, then?"
"We are afraid Dick Pembroke was not interested in Walnut Ridge fully till then."
"O yes, sir," continued this budget of news, "as pretty a thing as there is in the country. Ah, it must be a change for her, what with governesses at home, dancing and music-masters, horses and her own servants, she must feel it sharp, sir—very sharp. Did you say, sir, you were going all the way up to Chardville?"
"No; I think I will alter my mind, and take a ramble over this old farm. Your account has interested me."
"What, not over the house?" said the driver, with real concern in his tones.
"Yes. Why not?"
"Well, sir—well—Who-a! Ho-o!—you know best, of course. But I wouldn't go into that house—no, not if you would plug this whipstock with gold. I wouldn't—"
Pembroke smiled at the driver's extravagant ideas of being bribed to enter the haunted house, but laughing gaily, he bounded from the stage, shouted a good-by, and darted through the crazy old gateway directly towards Walnut Ridge.

CHAPTER II.

THE MYSTERIOUS INTRUDER.

AFTER Pembroke left the communicative driver, he strolled along leisurely towards the smaller buildings which had been described to him as Walnut Ridge, and he could not but be pleased with the beauty of the scenery surrounding him. At the left, upon a gentle rise, were the neat-looking buildings on the Ridge. Before him the quaint, sombre-looking house of the main farm, built of good solid English brick, and looking as staunch now as it was in seventeen hundred and something, when it was put up; on all sides the beautiful fields sloping towards the dark woods on one side, and to the broad, placid river beyond, on the other. Way off in the distance, amidst picturesque groups of pines, which from his position almost looked impenetrable, the clay chimneys of "quarter" houses loomed above their waving tops, and the cheerful songs of the negroes at work were borne faintly to his ears. On every side the fields were rich with golden grain, or the tall grass intervening and looking like beds of emeralds; the pleasant quiet, that soothing, dreamy stillness in the air, that feeling of peace and repose which the country always brings to him who is satiated with the bustle, glitter and pomp of the world of the cities, in this hour pervaded the soul of Pembroke, and he felt almost sad that he was so near the house at Walnut Ridge, he longed so much to stroll listlessly, carelessly along, his feet straying into pleasant, untrudged paths, almost without his thoughts controlling them.

But he stood before the door of the house at Walnut Ridge. All was quiet in and about the house, the buzzing of the flies only relieving the dead quiet everywhere; but he had scarcely placed his hand upon the door to knock, when a fierce-looking terrier monster flew from behind the wood-pile, and with dreadful bark, and a prodigious display of teeth, seemed disposed to test the tenderness of the stranger's calf, who found now that he would be fully occupied in

preventing that disagreeable action. He seized a short stick of wood and parried off the fierce attack ably, but the animal was indefatigable, and attacked at all points, and there is no doubt but what he would have succeeded in beating in the outposts and taking the fort by storm, had not an ally unexpectedly arrived in the person of an imbecile-looking colored boy, who had only to shout:

"Hi! hi! Snap—hi—he off wid you!" for the dog to creep sullenly, and by his mournful-looking eyes and voracious mouth, we risk but little in saying, regretfully, away.

But this charitable action performed, said darkey seemed to think his politeness should cease, for he stood regarding the beated and puffing stranger with curious eyes, and at last opened his wonderful mouth, from the depths of which issued, as from some caverned recess, a most discordant laugh.

"Hi-yi! Snap come a-near—hab you. Hi! Ha, ha, ho, he!"

"You rascal, what are you laughing at?" said the poor, provoked citizen. "I'll teach you." And he made a bound, caught the darkey by the neck, and had given him three or four hearty cuffs before the negro was aware that he was caught, and it was now evident the poor black was but half-witted, for although he had a heavy body, his head was diminutive and illy formed, and the instant he had received Pembroke's cuffs, he slunk down upon the earth, doubled himself up in a most ludicrous shape, and uttered such a baby-like, pitiful yell, that had not its sound been so comical, his clatter would really have been sorry for what he had done. He was upon the point of raising him up, and felt vexed enough to give him another cuff for his childishness, when a hand was laid lightly upon his arm. He turned around impatiently and met a pair of most beautiful brown eyes gazing reproachfully at him.

"Miss—ma'am—I beg your pardon," he stammered.

"Don't whip that poor boy, sir," the owner of the brown eyes said. "He is not exactly right, and has had trouble enough, poor fellow!"

"O, miss, I really beg pardon. I came over to look at the 'Dairy,' when the dog attacked me, and after the boy called him off, he aroused my anger by laughter; but I am very sorry—very."

The young lady received his intended apology coolly enough, indeed, and then invited him into the house to see her father, who would show him the farm. He followed her in, feeling very mean and properly ashamed of himself, and could any abasement be found which would have removed the remembrance of his conduct from the beautiful girl's mind, we are sure at that moment Dick Pembroke would have accepted it. Mr. Gaybrooke soon received the stranger, and with stately courtesy showed him all over the place. But what charmed Pembroke particularly, was the remarkable looking house, with its wide halls, the high windows and lofty ceilings—the former with the deep, old-fashioned casements—the ancient looking stairways; the wainscoted rooms all indicative of an age passed away. Then the cellars and the heavy archways of solid stone, and the grand, grim old fire-places before which our Revolutionary grandmothers have hobbled perhaps, the curious carvings and heavy mouldings along the ceilings, and everything massive and solid as stone, brick, and well-seasoned heavy wood could make it. The wide loft or attic, through the centre of which the chimney passed—and this attic being unplastered, the great weight of the beams and trusses used in the construction of the noble old building could be contrasted with the flimsy structures of the present day—all these things charming Pembroke more than the broad stretch of beautiful land and the glorious prospect of the noble Bush River; for he was looking upon the building as a relic of the Revolutionary era, and with somewhat of an antiquarian's eye. He became the owner of the Dairy Farm, and we will shortly tell the reader why he called it Walnut Ridge.

The autumn following the summer of Richard Pembroke's purchase, he came down from New York to take up his residence in the haunted mansion of the Dairy. During the summer he had extensive repairs going on about all the outbuildings, but he allowed no Vandal hand to touch a column, or disturb a moulding of the old brick mansion-house—that was sacred property. The neighbors far and near were canvassing the new proprietor. Many pronounced him a blockhead, more, a foolhardy, daring young man, to suppose he could dwell in peace in the haunted house, when so many brave men had been terrified beyond endurance. But the fact is, Dick Pembroke cared not a whit about ghosts or goblins; he was as brave as a lion, above all superstition, and was proceeding to make himself comfortable as rapidly as possible—but he had some secret, very secret plans of his own, which we cannot divulge just now.

And when the brown autumn came, Richard Pembroke moved to warm, genial Maryland. What though the dead leaves strewn the shaded walks, and cracked and rustled crisply beneath his bounding step? What though the sweet wild flowers were withered and pale, and through the dim woods which loomed up beyond the brown meadows the winds bleak and cold were dying with a moan? What though the frost hung blackening on the shrubs, and the dewdrops fell from them in frozen showers, and the many-hued leaves upon every tree and bush blended the gay and beautiful, the mournful and the tender?—His heart was as fresh and green as summer with her bright flowers and singing birds, for he was conscious of a more tender heart, a more enlarged soul, a sweeter hope, a brighter faith. He was living in a delicious dream. Should he awake, it would be with a fearful shudder, a spasm which would rend his heart, destroy his hope and blast his faith. May he not awake! Ah, it is very sweet to love—and Richard Pembroke was in love.

In love with beautiful little Milly Gaybrooke. And she was worthy the affection of any man, and had not cruel fortune deserted her father, crowds of suitors would have been bowing at her shrine. As it was, she had been obliged to

refuse two offers from young men who were all very well—good farmers who understood the application of lime and bone-dust thoroughly, but unfortunately lacked a very mysterious and not easily to be defined requisite—*soul*; who had no sympathies for any disease greater than the "hol-low horn" or "potato rot," and would by no means think of procuring a wife to perform any purer, higher, nobler duties, than to milk cows, make butter, and drop corn in busy season if help was short. And they asked Milly to marry them in much the same way as they would bid for a pair of short-horns, and were refused, as we before remarked; for, although their adversity had taught poor Milly proper humility, she could not quite crush out the seeds of her early education, and choke out the refinement of heart and feeling which was innate.

She had always treated Pembroke with politeness, but yet with a dignified coldness, which taught him she expected, if he recognized her at all—he, the rich proprietor—it must be as his equal, and at the same time conveyed to him, when he addressed her tenderly, that she would not be foolish enough to engage in any flirtation. Brave heart! Strong, womanly faith! respect follows in its train. And now the elegant man of the world, he who was wealthy and travelled, and could select with confidence the brightest gem from out the glittering casket of the elite of cities, was timid as a woman when he approached that simple country maiden, and feared and trembled lest she might despise him. He dreamed of her, whispered her name tenderly to the chill autumn winds, almost japing their harsh gales would carry it to her more softly than he spoke it; blushed when they met like any bumpkin, and if her dress touched his, would think how delicious the slightest contact of the beloved was, and go home to the grim old house, and sitting in the deep embrasure of the window, with the cold moonlight gliding into the deep corners, lighting up some strange carved head or shape, he would dream of her, as tenderly and fondly as any school boy, and dash run off into a thousand wild fancies of "how complete would this old house be if she were here, if she could but occupy this seat by me, and her merry, musical voice sound through these wide halls." And then he would dash to the blazing fire in the wide fireplace, light the lamps, expel the melancholy moonlight, and smoke religiously until nearly midnight, and tumble through the night with unquiet dreams, but with all he could not forget the fairy Milly.

But the spirits which haunted the old house. Did not Pembroke hear the strange noises which it was alleged drove all its former occupants from the premises? He did, reader, and night after night did he seek a solution of the mystery, but without throwing any light upon the subject. At various hours of the night would he be startled from a quiet slumber by dull, creaking noises, like the drawing back of some old panel from its unused case, or the flashing of strange, flickering lights through the chamber, which would penetrate the shadows here and there, and then suddenly disappear, permeating the darkness and then gradually melting in the gloom; then the sound of footsteps coming and going as though in ordinary occupation, coming nearer and nearer, then ceasing suddenly. On several occasions he had searched every nook and corner of the spacious habitation, expecting at each moment to come suddenly upon the mysterious nocturnal intruder, yet no traces could be found of any human being who could possibly make such noises as he heard. But still, at such times he would instinctively feel that some presence was near—at times he fancied he felt a human breath upon his cheek. But when he paused and searched, his blood would run cold to find himself the only human being awake and restless, wandering at dead of night in this mansion, with his flickering light casting strange shadows over the grotesque mouldings, and carved ancient heads and figures, each one of which seemed at such times to be endowed with myriad eyes, each one of which would start and blink and glare upon him.

But still, when daylight came, and the broad, genial sunlight penetrated his spacious chambers, he would laugh at his foolish fears, and vow that no ghosts or hobgoblins should drive him from the neighborhood of her whom he loved so dearly. But when night again came round he grew uneasy, and prolonged the hours in the lower parts of the house considerably before he retired to his chamber.

It was a blistering, windy night in the latter part of October. Dick Pembroke felt uncommonly lonely upon this night, and pictured to himself a thousand times the figure of Milly Gaybrooke gracing the comfortable vacant chair upon the opposite side of the fireplace, her plump, round arms nestled among the downy soft cushions, her fair, oval face with the faint color growing into deep, happy blushes as her soft, brown eyes looked fondly upon him. Him—*laugh!* He knew he was growing sentimental as a sixteen-year-old boarding-school miss, but had she not spoken to him so kindly to-day? Had not she relaxed somewhat her coldness? No, Richard T. Pembroke—no! And the fire cracked the negative fiercely out to him, as the last spark died upon the hearth, and he had to go to bed, miserable bachelor, to get rid of solitude. No lights—no fire—if possible no thoughts.

He ascended into his chamber, and after retiring and making himself generally wretched with his thoughts, not one of which originated in common sense, was invested with judgment, or ended in resolution, he fell into an uneasy slumber. It must have been midnight when he awoke, for the old brass clock in the dining-room below, loud, with an eccentricity habitual to it, just struck twenty, and he gazed around him timidly, for he seemed to feel that unaccountable presence, which the most of us have experienced without being able to define how our belief originates, and yet we are certain that there is a wakeful, human observer by, as that we have no reason to believe so from optical evidence. So Richard Pembroke felt, and he peered cautiously towards the fireplace. There, the backlog was still burning in a smouldering, defiant sort of way, and ever and anon condescended to throw a siffling light across

the wainscoting, from which Pembroke could make out a dim tracery of old beading, which seemed to support some pictures that he had hung there. Then all was obscure again, and sleeping, waking, and dozing off again, Pembroke must have passed another half hour. He awoke partially, stupidly once more. Heaven! what a sight he beheld! When his eyes unclosed, and he took in with a waking man's glance the objects in the room, they rested upon a figure standing nearly over him; a light (it seemed to be a small lantern) was held close to his head, partly aside, and flashed a bright, blinding beam full into his eyes, and scarcely could he comprehend his position, ere the figure turned and seemed to float rather than walk to the opposite side of the large apartment. In a moment Pembroke had recovered his presence of mind; he sprang quickly from his bed and darted upon the intruder. He could not escape him now—he was almost to the side of the apartment. Pembroke reached forth his hand to seize the strange visitor by a long cloak that he wore, when suddenly, without a word, with an unusual, excited motion, the pursued seemed to touch some secret spring in the wainscoting, it flew wide apart with a slight, creaking noise, and before the bewildered Pembroke could recover his surprise, the panels shut with a click in his face, much the same as we have seen traps in pantomimes, and silence reigned as profound as though the stillness of night had never been disturbed by any weird presence.

A light was struck, and every portion of the wainscoting critically examined, but not one irregular surface could be detected, or any portion moved, and the next day was spent in as fruitless endeavors as the previous night. Here then, was a mystery. And when Pembroke considered it, he had no difficulty in deciding that his strange visitor was a human being, and had no doubt that it was some deplorable plot to cause the desertion of the Dairy for some nefarious purpose, and he determined now to watch with zeal for the return of his midnight visitor, that he might bring him to a strict account. He confided his plans to none; upon himself he took all the danger, and providing himself with a good sword and an incomparable "Colt's patent," he felt himself quite able to meet and overcome any common adversary. Faithfully did he watch night after night—no re-appearance, until his haggard face began to attest how his loss of rest was injuring him; but still he was determined to keep his vigil. It was now nearly three weeks since the strange intrusion. A bitter cold night in November, snow had fallen during the day, and as Pembroke had taken a long walk before he dined, he felt unusually fatigued, and about twelve o'clock his head fell upon his arms, resting upon the round table in front of the fire in his room, and he slept soundly, very soundly from pure exhaustion. In about an hour he awoke suddenly with his hands upon his pistol, and there before him, right at his bedside, was the cloaked figure standing motionless. He was petrified. He raised his weapon—should he fire? No, not upon an unarmed man. He arose from the table, his form was quivering with excitement, his long, curling hair was in disorder around his handsome face. Still the figure stood like stone, his back towards the advancing Pembroke, and the long, dark cloak folded around him, while the light which was in the figure's hand played on the empty bed. So still, so quiet, surely this was not a human soul. Pembroke crept towards him like a tiger about to bound upon his prey, his fingers closing about the butt of his revolver with a nervous grip. He glanced upon the floor as he advanced—*there was more upon the carpet!* Now he was sure he had a living man to deal with, he ground out these words beneath his set teeth, in angry excitement: "Villain! I have you at last!"

Still almost motionless, the figure stood like a grim iron statue, if we except a shudder which ran through his frame, as Pembroke spoke; but instead of turning and confronting him, or flying, he moved quietly, slowly, away from the bedside, as softly and noiselessly as though wading through down. Pembroke fell back; he was awe-struck; there was something dreadful in all this. Slowly, mournfully the figure moved around that room, stopping at intervals and uttering such a deep, melancholy sigh, that it was grievous to hear it, so exquisitely sad it seemed, while Richard Pembroke, who a moment before was the furious man, was melted by such a tender sound of mournful heart-grief. Spellbound he watched the walker, as he approached more rapidly the side where he last disappeared. His pistol was now hanging in his nerveless grasp, down by his side, and the intruder might almost have struck him to the ground without resistance, so much was he affected by the strange power of this person and his movements. But now the dark-robed stranger had reached the portion of the room from which his last exit was made, the spring was pressed, the panels flew open, and in another instant the figure would pass through. But Pembroke seemed to recover his senses, he sprang forward rapidly, the pistol fell from his hand, and in falling the trigger was struck violently against the sharp edge of the iron fender, and a loud and deafening report followed. Pembroke had clutched the cloak, there was a shriek, and when the heavy cloak was dragged away, there, in the secret recess, stood *Milly Gaybrooke!*

But an instant did she look around her; she seemed with a woman's quickness to comprehend her position; her startled, terrified companion, his pale face blanched whiter as he gazed wonderingly at her, the cloak he held in his hand, the secret panel which led into what was formerly her own chamber, and now his—all, all burst upon her like a flash. She had been a somnambulist when a girl, had often wandered from her home, and into dangerous places. Now—*heavens!*—she had been walking in his chamber. These thoughts seemed to set her mad, her brain was in a whirl, for a moment her vision was clouded, and then with a faint, heart-rending moan, she sank upon the cold slabs in the secret recess, swooning.

But now Pembroke understood all. In an instant he recognized the somnambulist, and she had scarcely fallen, ere he lifted her in his arms,

and carried her into the room, chasing her hands and bathing her temples as tenderly and respectfully as though she was a dear sister, but (O, how much dearer she was to him, as she lay cold and white before him. But when with sobs and hysterical tears she recovered from her swoon, he tenderly reassured her, and told her all. How he had watched, had heard the sounds, and saw the cloaked form, and how he supposed, she was so peculiarly organized, that since her misfortunes her mind would naturally be directed to her dear old home, and consequently to her own chamber, and how he hoped now that she would consent to be his own dear wife, and give him leave to love and cherish her always, as he had done from the moment he saw her sweet face at Walnut Ridge; and how she must not refuse him now through any false pride, for she must remember, too, how happy her dear old father would be to come and live again at the old place—and how—and how—

But the sobs were only of joy now, and the large brown eyes were full of grateful, happy tears, and the little plump, white hand reposed trustfully in his large palm. And (O, it was such happiness there by the warm firelight, in the stillness of the night, to find themselves so sweetly, unexpectedly beloved. But of course Richard T. Pembroke must see Milly Gaybrooke home right away, to Walnut Ridge (God bless it! That shall be the name of the whole farm), and of course, the long black cloak must be wrapped tightly round the sweet somnambulist, and of course Dick Pembroke's arm formed a proper band at the waist to keep it in place, and of course—No matter what that sour bachelor neighbor Harry Marshall says—they form the dearest, best married couple in the country. And O, to go and see the quaint, old, historical house, and to find the way, be sure to inquire (if even twenty miles away) for Walnut Ridge.

BOARDING AT A FIRST CLASS HOTEL.

BY MRS. M. A. DENISON.

CHAPTER I.

THE momentous question was at length decided—Mr. and Mrs. Moore would board out. At first they thought of housekeeping, but Nora feared the pressure of care attendant upon such an establishment as they must keep up. In her mother's house, a low, rambling building, extending over half an acre or more, the rooms nearly all on the ground floor, she had found it easy to do the tasks allotted her; but young Lawyer Moore had just come into a large fortune, and, as was natural, he wished to enjoy it by living in a style befitting his wealth.

Harry Moore had passed twenty-nine years of bachelor life, before he saw the girl who seemed, in his eyes, fitted to bless him with the heaven of her love. He first met her at the house of Gen. Mott, a soldier distinguished in the annals of his country. Eleanora was on a visit there, and the sweet, sunny frankness of her temperament charmed him. He saw also that she was no fashionable idler—that she always had her self-appointed tasks. Whether they were her arduous attentions to the general's wants, while he lay ill of a Southern fever, or the homelier rounds of domestic keeping, she was equally gentle and graceful. He learned how deeply the heart may be interested in an unpretending, and almost plain woman—for Nora was not strictly beautiful, save only to those to whom she was as near an angel in all things as a mortal can well be.

After the beginning of this acquaintance, amid the show and formalities of city life, Harry sought the sweet girl in her own country home—a paradise of rural beauty. There the impression was only deepened. The bread that her own fair hands had made, he thought had never been equaled. Whether he saw the merry Nora, handkerchief on head, and fingers snugly ensconced in gloves, putting the cheerful rooms to rights, or coaxing up flowers from the brown garden mould, (it seemed sometimes as if her smiles alone would bring them,) he was equally charmed. The consequence was, Harry became a married man: "threw himself away," as his city friends had it, "upon a country girl," when he might have had so many brilliant chances.

But he was thrown away, and no help for it.

Many of his former admirers would have smiled at the cosy *tete-a-tetes* the young bride and groom indulged in previous to their marriage.

"What do you say to a tip-top house, free stone, swell front, and everything to match?" Harry asked, laughingly, one day. "I have a splendid chance to get one."

"For us two," cried Nora, "and servants to match? Why the cook would rule me, and the chamber-maid wear all my nice dresses. I tell you frankly, I don't yet want the huge care of large housekeeping."

"But you say you could not live idly; I am sure you would not enjoy hotel life then."

"But why need we be idle in a hotel, any more than in a dwelling house?"

"Why, my dear, the servants are expected to do all the labor there."

"That depends," said Nora, laughing. "Say we had a fine suite of rooms, three would be sufficient—it would give me just employment enough. How dearly I should love to take care of them!"

"But—what would *they* say?"

"There! I never expected to hear a man broach that question. If I have your approbation, and the approval of my conscience, what do you suppose I care what they say? I will put my heart and hands beside any of theirs, and see if they are not every whit as white. And then," her cheek flushed as she straightened herself, "I should glory in the independence. I *do* like to be original."

"And original you certainly will be, in this scheme," said Harry, looking at her with admiration in his glance. "I shall not gainsay it, as it is absolutely necessary, you tell me, for your health, that you should perform manual labor of some kind, daily. As to what 'they say,' I only spoke in sport; I am as indifferent to the gossip of a hotel, or a community, as you could wish me to be. I am to stipulate then for rooms, but not for help?"

"You need say nothing about the latter clause," laughed Nora. "I'll see to that, as of course I shall need some little assistance. But come, mother is calling us to see the cake, it is her *chef d'œuvre*, of course"

Away they went into the great kitchen, two

as noble beings, as fitly mated as the world has ever seen.

CHAPTER II.

It was a serene day in autumn. The stir and bustle of the noisy city came in a muffled undertone to the room where sat two young ladies conversing. One of them was very evidently a bride, for near her elbow stood a centre-table covered with silver, the elegant gifts of friends. She was a pale blonde; and the robe of white, so daintily edged and flounced, certainly heightened her beauty not a little. Delicious perfume floated on the air. There was drapery of lace and silk everywhere: luxury and high-toned fashion predominated.

The other, quite young and also handsome, sat with her bonnet on, a trifle of a parasol dangling from one white gloved hand. She too was attired in the latest mode of morning outdoor toilet. She had evidently been admiring the numerous articles spread before her, and a pleased smile still parted her lips.

"I wonder who is going to take the third suite of rooms on this floor?" said the fair Mrs. Lasselle, who had sold her heart to a man forty years older than herself.

"What is the style?" asked her friend.

"Red and green damask—beautiful! I should have preferred it to this, for I am not partial to blue and gold, though it rather suits my complexion, you know; but Mr. Lasselle is quite set in his way, and I wanted to please him. It's somebody who is wealthy, that's certain. Oh! my dear Mrs. Lyle," she said, as a new guest entered, "I'm delighted to see you."

"How do you find yourself this morning?" queried the new comer, whose light silk morning wrapper trailed along the rich carpet, "I was so lonesome I thought I must call. How do you do, my dear Miss Dean? Really, I haven't seen you for an age. Now you mustn't think," turning to Mrs. Lasselle, "I've come here just because I was *ennuied*, not at all: but I've such news to tell you!"

"Do enliven us, I beg you, Mrs. Lyle," murmured the bride, languidly, "I am so longing for a bit of gossip."

"Well then, dear, to begin at the beginning. You know Mr. Harry Moore, that very handsome young lawyer?"

The cheeks of Mrs. Lasselle crimsoned instantaneously.

"Twas acquainted with him," she replied.

"Yes—so Mrs. Mervin said. Indeed, I think she hinted that he was quite pointed in his attentions before Mr. Lasselle came along.

However, that's neither here nor there—this same Harry is married: and *who*, my dear, do you suppose he has taken for better or worse?"

"I'm sure I can't guess," said the young bride, with a faint laugh; "Mr. Moore was always a peculiar being."

"I should think so. Well, cousin John Hathaway wrote to his wife, last Monday, and told her all about it. Everybody who knows him and his elegant tastes is astounded, I assure you. Why, my dear, he has married a country girl, a plain, common creature, who, I dare say, knows no more about the proprieties of city life than a country kitchen. And then, to cap the climax, he is going to bring her here, right into this hotel."

"Then it's for him," cried the bride, aghast.

"Yes, it's for him that those beautiful rooms are taken. Isn't it outrageous, for there's no denying they are the best in the house? And, no longer ago than last night, a friend of my husband applied for them—would have given any price for them—is willing now to offer a handsome bonus for possession. But it's impossible; the rooms have been engaged over a week, and we may soon expect this creature to preside over them in state."

"It will be solitary state, then, for I don't mean to be more than merely civil," said Mrs. Lasselle.

"I don't intend to be even that," said Mrs. Lyle, contemptuously. "Likely as not she was a drudge of a school teacher in some out-of-the-way village: and it isn't at all probable that she has a single connection to be proud of. Only think, she makes butter and cheese; and, in fact, I dare say she works harder than the girls in this hotel; yes, and likely is proud of it. She needn't expect to gain any sympathy here for her vulgar notions. I shall cut her outright."

"She *may*, however, be a refined and intelligent woman," said Miss Dean, who had once been (before she was adopted by a wealthy uncle) a country school mistress herself.

"Impossible, my dear Miss Dean, from what my cousin's wife said. She is the daughter of a farmer, and her father, having long been dead, it is likely they were in very reduced circumstances; that is what I inferred, at any rate. Mr. Moore is, however, rich: you heard, likely enough, what a large fortune his grandfather has just left him."

The cheeks of Mrs. Lasselle burned again. If that fortune had but come a few months sooner, perhaps it might have altered the whole

tenor of her life. For she was certain, or thought she was, that Harry once loved her.

"I do wonder how she will act here!" Mrs. Lyle said, laughing, as she drew out her crochet needles and commenced to work. "If there is anything I have a real contempt for, it's a gawky woman. Now it isn't at all probable that Harry Moore would marry a woman entirely ignorant of good manners; but, bless you, we women can always tell the gawky or the boor: for it is so hard trying to conceal either. However, we shall have our fun, no doubt."

"She will make a sensation you think then, if it is only for your fun," said the gentle Miss Dean. "Now I prophesy you will be completely disappointed in her."

"Do you know her?" eagerly inquired both ladies.

"No. I have not even heard of her, certainly not seen her; but I feel impressed that she must have some remarkable points, or Harry Moore would never have been attracted by her."

"Oh! love is blind, you know," said Mrs. Lyle. Miss Dean rose to take her leave, while the two ladies, both young and but recently married, lingered together to chat and surmise.

CHAPTER III.

"WELL, so the new arrival is really here," said Mrs. Lyle, one evening, not long after. "I suppose we shall see her at breakfast."

"Julia, the second chamber-maid, says they will breakfast in their room," said Mrs. Lasselle.

"What, as a general thing?"

"Yes, as a general thing."

"Mighty aristocratic! But no; here is the reason, you may depend. He's afraid of the public breakfast. If ever a woman shows want of tact, taste, and good breeding, it's in a breakfast toilet. That's proof positive that he's a little afraid and ashamed. I declare I feel bad for, and provoked at, him. I saw him just now, and positively he's the most splendid man in the hotel. Looked happy, too, poor fellow—he's one of that kind, you know—will mask his face in smiles if his heart should be aching. It provokes me to see such men throw themselves away. All our set are dying to see the bride. There's little Donizelli, that Frenchman's wife, she does say the oddest things in her broken English. Said she this morning, 'Such Apollo Belvidere ought to have one of de graces for his husband.' Did you ever? 'For his husband.' She didn't notice her mistake, and the whole table was laughing: she thought, doubtless, at her wit."

At that moment a heavy step was heard. The ladies were in Mrs. Lasselle's room. A gouty step it was, matched by a disagreeably plethoric cough, and the regular tap of an advancing cane, whose point was shod with iron. The door opened, and an obese old man entered, bald-headed, a silk handkerchief tied about his temples, his clothes dusty, his whole appearance that of a man who prided himself on whatever was his, dirt included, and dirt especially. This was Mr. Lasselle. He kissed his wife first, she turning her head hastily away, then said to her guest, "Don't move, Mrs. Lyle—don't move," and stamped toward the register.

"This room isn't warm enough," he continued, "it never is warm enough to suit me. I wish you'd pay a little more attention, my dear, to the register, or I must get some one to come up and attend to it for you. Do it if you say so—plenty of money, you know—do it if you say so."

"Oh! I'll be more careful," said Mrs. Lasselle, with reddening cheeks. "But did you know how very much soiled your boots are? Do you want your slippers?"

"Siled, ho! ha!—siled, are they? Well, I can afford it—I can afford it."

So little removed from dotage was the old man, that he continually repeated himself, and before his wife could recover from her mortification, he muttered, "I can afford it, at least six times," meanwhile tracking the dried mud all over the carpet.

"We've got Moore here, they say; used to be your old sweetheart, eh, lovey?" continued he, turning to his wife and chuckling. "Handsome fellow, very—and yet she preferred old Lasselle, eh?—she preferred old Lasselle. Well, she shan't regret it—she shall ride in a carriage all the days of her life—yes, all the days of her life—of her life, eh! of her life."

Mrs. Lyle arose to take her leave.

"Oh! now, Miss Lyle, don't go 'cause I've come. Old saying is three ain't company, I know, but don't think much of old saying. How's Bob? I call Lyle Bob—used to be college-mate o' mine, you see, in the days o' Lang Syne. Pretty gray, isn't he, well as myself? Ought not to be; in the ile business, eh? ho! ho! ha!—in the ile business—ile business."

The ladies glanced at each other involuntarily, as the old gentleman began to cough in a snuffy handkerchief. Oh! how much—had there been an interpreter near—did that glance signify?

"Thank heaven! if my husband is old, he isn't quite a bear," Mrs. Lyle said, on the same

day, to one of her dearest, most fashionable friends. "There's that poor Mrs. Lasselle, to see what she suffers when that old ruffian spits about, and uses the carpet for mat-scrappers. It's shocking—it's abominable! I wonder she could marry him."

"Why, Jenny, dear, he is a millionaire! Who would not put up with oddities?"

"But—vulgarity!" echoed Mrs. Lyle, with a contemptuous face.

"Oh! well, he'll die soon, perhaps, and if she only works her cards right, he'll leave her the bulk of his fortune; then won't she be a very, very interesting young woman? By-the-by, she's a blonde—would look charming in mourning. How nice it is to be beautiful! Emma Lasselle was a poor girl—a *very* poor girl. I wish I was handsome, I know of some chances I'd have."

CHAPTER IV.

"DEAR, dear Harry, what beautiful rooms!"

"I thought they would suit you, my little wife," said Harry, smiling to see with what grace Nora fitted the luxuries he had prepared for her. "I bought that maroon sofa because it is so like your mother's, in that never-to-be-excelled parlor at home; and that lounge, because you admired the one at the general's. I had it made exactly by his pattern."

"Oh! how good, how good and kind you are, Harry. I shall never forget it."

"I hope not," said her husband, demurely. "Indeed, I don't intend you shall, because if ever you grow naughty, you know, I shall immediately begin to enumerate the fine things I have given you."

"I must unpack my trunks," Nora went on, giving him one of her glad, bright smiles. "I must choose a dress for the morning, I suppose."

"Of course you must, and the prettiest one you have, since I shall be your only company."

She looked at him a moment, not comprehending.

"I mean that I have ordered that we shall have breakfast brought up."

"Oh! I'm so glad!" was Nora's exclamation. "I wish we could have all our meals so."

"Oh! no. I want to show you off. I have a score of friends here, who would take it very unkindly if I should shut you up like a selfish curmudgeon."

"Any ladies?" queried Nora.

"Plenty; so put on your very handsomest face when we go down. Let me see; there are

three, certainly, I used to know: two of them are miserably married to rich old grandfathers; but the other, I believe, is happily wedded."

"So your plenty has dwindled down to three," said Nora, mockingly; "I am not afraid of three."

This was near evening, and Nora was much too fatigued to go down to supper.

On the following day, the first chamber-maid appeared at an earlier period than usual in the rooms of Mrs. Lasselle. She was short, dumpy, red-armed, red-haired, and as plethoric as the old merchant Lasselle himself.

Mrs. Lasselle was not above entering into confidential chit-chat with the girls in the hotel. She knew there was something on the chamber-maid's mind, by the way Nannie swung her flaming arms around.

"Well, Nannie," said Mrs. Lasselle, who was trimming a very showy head-dress, "I suppose you've seen the new boarder? You're more favored than we are."

"Indeed I have, ma'am!" exclaimed the girl, with unusual brevity of tone; "and it's little I cared if I never see her no more—indeed it is, Miss Lasselle. There ain't no ladies as takes people's work right out o' their hands, without as much as y'r leave. Oh!" and she slammed the dust-pan into a corner with a most desperate vindictiveness.

"Why, what has she done, Nannie?"

"Done, ma'am," and Nannie for a moment deposited her brawny arms on her hips, her hands hanging down in utter impotence of indignation—"done!" It's enough to make a female despise her. Don't you think," and here Nannie lowered her voice mysteriously, "I went to her rooms an hour ago, thinking how I would do my best at keeping 'em nice, as I keeps all these handsome rooms, when she says, says she, without hardly looking up, says she, 'Oh! I've preferred to do most of the work myself; there's only this and that to attend to!' I declare to you, ma'am, if I wasn't struck dumb: and she spoke it as topping, too, as if she'd been the greatest lady in the land."

"You don't mean to say!" cried Mrs. Lasselle, with intense horror, "you can't mean to say, Nannie, that her work was absolutely done, that Mrs. Moore did it herself?"

"She was that little of a lady, ma'am; indeed yes, and it were so intirely and insolutely. She was fixed up as grand as you please, besides. Thinks I to meself, well, if ye're your own body servint and house servint, much good may ye git for your services, but I'll be boun' you won't git much thought of by the ladies in *this* house,

who is real ladies, as most of 'em is, Miss Lasselle."

"Why, what a low-born creature she must be!" exclaimed Mrs. Lasselle, catching again at the ribbons which her astonishment had caused to drop, "of all things I *ever* heard of, boarding in a first class hotel and doing her own work. Well, if that isn't something to talk about! I guess Harry Moore is very proud of his wife;" this she said rather to herself. But the housemaid caught it up.

"Well you may say, ma'am—well you may say you guess he's proud of his wife. Why, ma'am, what didn't he brought her down to breakfast for, if 'twan't that, he's dead ashamed ov her? If I was the woman, for the sake of me husband, and he such a splendid gentleman, I'd do as others did, wouldn't I though?"

Before noon the confidential whispers grew louder. Mrs. Lasselle had flown to Mrs. Lyle's room with the announcement, Mrs. Lyle had gone to her neighbor, she to the next, and so on the entire length and breadth of the hotel. The matter was duly canvassed, laughed over, sneered at, by all the lily-fingered women who did nothing for whole blessed days but sit, eat, dress, visit, and sleep; and the boarders *en masse* resolved to let Mrs. Moore know that they did not consider her a lady.

Dinner was never more impatiently awaited than on that particular day. Mrs. Lasselle imparted her opinion to several of the boarders. It was to the intent that she had no doubt Harry Moore felt thoroughly ashamed of his wife, and that very likely she would make her appearance in sea-green, red, or some ridiculous color. The great gong sounded while Nora, utterly unconscious of the commotion she had raised by her simple habits, had just put the finishing touch to her toilet. It was exquisite; her husband said, exultingly, that she looked like a little queen. Everything was rich, but nothing elaborate. The pure laces, that encircled the throat and hung gracefully over her arms, were of the softest, most costly fabric. Her cheeks were touched by a natural crimson, the full folds of her robes hung faultlessly—she was as charming as a picture.

At least she created a sensation when she entered the dining hall. Eyes fell, confounded; lips were hopelessly parted, and but little said. Could that graceful creature, with a face not strictly beautiful, but extremely striking, even fascinating; with hands white and clear as those of an infant; and with such faultless manners and quiet self-possession, be the woman who did her own house work, the untaught country

girl? I fear that appetites were lost that day, and dainty articles sent pettishly from the table. Such gossiping as ensued! And worse than that, they would not tell the truth about her; but agreed that she had no style, was *very* plain, but appeared rather better than they had anticipated.

CHAPTER V.

MEANWHILE Nora went on the even tenor of her way. It hardly seemed like hotel life to Harry, this pleasant, secluded room was always so lighted by the cheerful smile of his wife, so beautified by her presence, more than gilding, paneling, and rosewood could make it. When he asked her how she got along with the ladies in the house, she always laughed in a merry way, and said they treated her very well. In fact, she liked their distance better than she would their warmest friendship. She was never lonesome, and had no tact for fine talk or fashionable sentiment, and she did not particularly admire the boarders. Her books, her flowers, her household avocations, and her pen occupied her constantly; these, with music, constituted the home enjoyments of the young couple.

"She will do *very* well," said Mrs. Lyle, one day after passing Nora in the hall, "and I see she has a new set of furs. Such extravagance, Mrs. Lasselle, they are actually the very set we prized of Bentons, and cost a thousand dollars. No one can deceive me in furs; I'm a capital judge; can detect an imitation at once: hers are real Russian sable, none of your *méde* Hudson's Bay. Yes, she's rather interesting: but who is she?"

"True enough," queried Mrs. Lasselle, "who is she? I expect you might know her twenty years and she'd never tell. She's one of those close-mouthed beings, and, I guess if the truth was known, she don't care about telling. I'll tell you what I think, Harry Moore had educated, and is still educating her. She goes out regularly every day to take music lessons, no doubt; for I hear a hammering on the piano in that direction."

"My dear, let us go into the parlor, to-night," said Harry, one day. "We are making ourselves rather exclusive, are we not? At least once a month, perhaps, it would be good policy to visit that room of chandeliers, Saxony carpets, and gilding."

"Just as you say, Harry," replied Nora. "I tried to fraternize two or three times, and went into the parlor when I knew the ladies were there. But most of them were so occupied with callers; and—oh! Harry," she raised her large,

brown eyes to his face—"did you know they flirted?"

"Who flirted?" queried Harry.

"Why, the ladies, I never saw anything like it."

"Well, well, we won't talk about that, little mentor; but come, get ready, and we'll take a survey below."

Dressed in a tasteful blue silk, Mrs. Moore entered the parlor with her husband. There were nearly twenty couples there, some of whom Mrs. Moore was on speaking terms with: others she did not know. It was surprising how very pleasantly the ladies chatted with Harry, and how seldom spoke to his wife, beyond advancing some simple remark.

"Why, Mr. Moore, do you know who Mrs. Moore is talking with?" asked Mrs. Lasselle, growing suddenly animated.

Harry looked across the room. There sat Nora, her face aglow, chatting in her sweetly gracious manner to a tall man rejoicing in a full beard and moustache, eagle eyes, and a Roman nose.

"If I am not mistaken, it is the Spanish Charge, who is stopping here for a few days. Ah! I see—Mark Grafton, my friend, must have introduced him."

"But, Mr. Moore, he scarcely speaks a dozen words of English; he is studying constantly, they say."

"Oh! I know, but Nora has spoken both French and Spanish for years. She is very likely talking with him in one or the other of those languages. Poor fellow! how delighted he seems! she must be using his own admirable dialect."

Mrs. Lasselle's face changed to a deep crimson: she felt uncomfortable. This little woman was her superior in one thing—perhaps in many."

"There's a sign that she wants me," said Harry, laughing, and hurrying toward her with all the fresh joy of a lover.

"Harry dear, Mr. Bonsuler is so anxious that I should sing. What shall I do?"

"Gratify him, by all means," returned her husband. "Come," and he led her to the piano. That hour the great dames of the A— House had the satisfaction of listening to a few beautiful songs, both in French and Spanish, sang in superb style. They looked, they flushed—they bit their lips: in fact, they were chagrined beyond all expression. But they had taken a prejudice which they were not likely soon to give up. The blooming, smiling, happy wife of Harry Moore had rebuked them too plainly,

unconsciously though it was done, to become a favorite with these merely purse-proud automats. The glow of health that brightened cheeks and lips came naturally there, because she obeyed the laws of her being, and despised helplessness and inactivity. Her eyes beamed with the innocent light of a deep felt joy, for such things as petty malice, jealousy, backbiting, flirting, had never troubled even the surface of her-soul. So the more they wondered and gossiped about her, the more grew wonder, and the bitterer gossip, till they had managed to set the report afloat, nobody knew how, nor who by, that Harry Moore's wife was a prodigy—that she had been taken with some gentleman's family when very young on account of poverty: and nobody knew what else.

Of all this Nora was ignorant. She did not aspire to the close communion of such women as Mrs. Lyle and Mrs. Lasselle, though they were the wealthiest ladies in the house, were quoted and followed by the smaller fry: and kept their own carriages. There were, however, some congenial minds in the A— House, who, while they did not aspire to the first floor and costly suites of rooms, were unmistakably nobler in their possessions than many of those who did.

CHAPTER VI.

"My dear, I have great news to tell you," said Harry, as he came home one evening. "I am certain it will astonish you."

"I should like to be astonished," said Nora, simply.

"Well, then, listen with all your little ears. Uncle Mott, Gen. Mott, I should rather say, is up for the presidency."

If Harry had expected astonishment, he was not disappointed. Nora sprang from her seat, her eyes dilated.

"Harry Moore, is it possible?" she cried, almost wildly.

"Nora Moore, it is possible," was the response: "read the papers."

"I never could have believed it of uncle Mott," said Nora, after she had run her eye eagerly over the intelligence; "he is such a peculiar man, so fond of home and quiet! What can have happened to change his mind, for I see he has shown no objection to the nomination?"

"Oh! political friends!" laughed Harry.

"But he is so old!" urged Nora.

"Old! Hale sixty, and a constitution like iron: bless his russet cheeks. Did you see, they are going to get up a reception in this

very city, and arrangements are made for the old general to come to this very house?"

"Capital! then I shall see him, dear old uncle!" cried Nora.

"Yes, after the procession. It's arranged that they will meet him on the outskirts of the city at nine or ten. The show will pass by here, I suppose; I heard them hinting about flags, and streamers, and a grand illumination in the evening. Of course there'll be an accompaniment of fire-works kept up by the outsiders, plenty of music and fun. In the evening, if the old man isn't too fatigued, we'll have him to ourselves."

"Yes, indeed!" Nora's face glowed with pleasure, "only think! I haven't seen him for six months. Dear old uncle, how kind in him to send me those beautiful furs before he went traveling last winter! I rather think," and she looked up slyly, "I was an object of some little envy whenever I wore them."

"I shouldn't wonder if you were an object of some little envy even without them," said Harry, laughing.

Perhaps at the same moment, certainly on the same evening, Mrs. Lasselle and Mrs. Lyle, who were fast friends, were talking upon the same subject.

"Mr. Lasselle, who is a great politician, you know, my dear, intends to illuminate our suite splendidly. It will be a grand procession; husband is appointed one of the marshals. Dear me—how will he look on horseback?"

"Did you ever see the general?" asked Mrs. Lyle.

"I never did. I suppose he will make his appearance at the *table d'hôte*. Dear me, what shall you wear, Mrs. Lyle? I believe I will put on my now peach-color, one wants to look one's best before the old hero. Mr. Lasselle met him once in New Orleans, was introduced to him, so I suppose upon that etiquette he may claim acquaintance. They say he is splendid-looking indeed. I should judge so from his portraits."

"We are going to have seats in the lower balcony. I hope you have engaged yours," said Mrs. Lyle.

"Bless me, I never thought of it! Do you think it possible that they are all taken up?"

"I shouldn't wonder," was the reply. "They have already been numbered. Harry Moore and his wife, it seems, were offered the first choice, so they have the most eligible seats."

"I do think our landlord is strangely taken with that little Moore. Do you notice how attentive he is to her? All her wants supplied almost before she speaks. One thing I know:

she is a mighty cunning piece, in spite of her demureness. But I really must have a seat in the lower balcony. By-the-way, did you observe, yesterday, that the governor's carriage stood at the door?"

"Oh! yes, Mrs. May told me. She says the governor's lady and niece called upon some one here—the Ellises perhaps; I heard that they were acquainted. We never know, though, upon what footing persons like Mrs. Ellis stand with people of settled gentility."

The speakers little knew that the call had been made on Mrs. Moore.

That evening Mr. Lasselle secured the coveted seat, bringing home some beautiful arrangements in the way of illumination. For a week nothing was talked of but the expected reception. People came and sent from all quarters to engage rooms at the A—— House. Stacks of flags and decorations were set down at the entrances, and soon fashioned into draperies of every size and form. Over the great entrance, arranged in starry letters, each an illumination, were words, "Welcome to the hero." In every window were wreaths, and ovals, and countless devices for beautifying the expected night. Across the street an arch was thrown, to be hung with colored lanterns: in short, every means was resorted to that the reception might reach far beyond the excellence of previous orations.

CHAPTER VII.

THE expected day was ushered in with a cloudless morning. At an early hour the streets began to be thronged with spectators. Every carriage and coachman, every ragged boy that ran barefooted in the gutters, every pedlar, every wheelbarrow, underwent the scrutinizing glances of the crowd, who had come hither to look, and intended to overlook nothing. Now and then the music of a distant band caused a simultaneous rush forward, but nothing was to be seen till the hands of the ponderous city clock pointed to eleven, and the children, tired of the heat, the inactivity, and even of the candy with which their little hands were filled, began to cry for sensation. The front of the A—— House was crowded with beauty. The splendor of the dresses; the flashing of jewels, bright eyes, and brighter smiles, made a spectacle as admirable as need to have been desired; and the crowds opposite appeared to think so, for they scarcely turned their eyes from the teeming tiers. On the lower balcony, which was protected from the sun by an awning of bright silk, sat the chief ladies of the A—— House, or who

ever had procured that privilege by the aid of gold. Mrs. Lasselle and Mrs. Lyle were dressed with great splendor, while Nora wore only a plain black silk, and no jewelry. Presently there was a distant gleam and glitter, a loud flourish of trumpets, and lo! the conquering hero came. First there were bodies of cavalry; then foot companies in elegant uniform; then marshals and old citizens in barouches; then, closely hemmed by the crowd, the noblest Roman of them all, surrounded by state dignitaries, his white hair blown over a massive and bronzed forehead, his handsome features lighted with martial enthusiasm, his heart cheered by the warm greeting of the people who shouted along the line.

"Here he comes. There he is. That must be he standing up just now," were the various exclamations of the occupants of the lower balcony. On came the splendid show, the general bowing composedly, right and left. As he fronted the balcony, however, a quick smile of recognition brightened his face, and, with a bow of unusual deference, he passed them. Nora's eyes were shining with tears, happy tears, but she did not speak; while Mrs. Lasselle gazed triumphantly over to Mrs. Lyle, as much as to say, "Did you see that?" Secretly each of these vain women passed the compliment to her own account; but Nora said nothing. She was not one to parade her emotions: still she turned a pleased smile on her husband, who only whispered, "How glad he seemed to see you! I shouldn't wonder if that was really the pleasantest moment of the whole."

The din of trumpets, the sound of all the brass-throated instruments, gradually fell to the softest strain of an echo, as the great spectacle wound on to carry pleasure to other sight-seers. Soon the balcony was deserted. Harry had said that they two must be among the first to welcome the old general, and accordingly they wended their way to the parlor, where already many were assembled for the same purpose. They seated themselves on a lounge in the near vicinity of Mrs. Lasselle and her party, and where they could not avoid hearing the conversation.

"I am really very anxious for an introduction to the old hero," said Mrs. Lasselle, adjusting her bracelet; "Henry, I shall depend upon you to present me."

"Oh! yes—certainly—certainly," lisped the young man beside her, whose dangerous whisks and faultless curls were very often in close proximity to the fair lady's cheeks as he leaned down to address her. "I was once very inti-

mate with the general," he added; "he would do anything to give me pleasure, I assure you."

"Nora, do you remember him?" whispered Harry, with mischief in his eyes. "You ought to, for as he says he was very intimate."

"Oh! yes," and Nora smiled back, "he was Surgeon Rees' clerk. He does not recognize me, though I saw him more than once, when I was with uncle."

"Some women would have said Surgeon Rees' valet; for he was in reality that," replied Harry, "but you are altogether above and beyond some women. However, as he has had a fortune left him, we must let by-gones be by-gones, only it does annoy me to see fellows put on such airs."

There was an immense stir and bustle below stairs; then many steps heard approaching. The door opened, and the handsome face of the general appeared, backed by a crowd of men of note. The company rose as he bowed slightly, and moved forward, talking with his friends.

"Ah! excuse me," he cried, "here is my little Nora. I am so glad to see you, my darling. There, you must pardon me for kissing you before company, but I am an old-fashioned man, you know. Well, my pet," he had both her hands now, and was leading her to an unoccupied seat, she smiling and blushing, Harry following, Mrs. Lasselle gazing dumbly on, blue with wonder, "how do you like hotel life, and what do you find to occupy yourself with, both active brain and active fingers? I miss you more than I can tell, must have you back again. Ain't you ashamed of yourself, sir, taking my child away from me at my time of life, and bringing her to waste her precious time in a fashionable hotel?" he said, laughing, turning to Harry. "I'm afraid the good old habits my sister taught her are fast being merged into useless inactivity and purposeless labor."

"You never need fear for Nora, sir," said Harry; "she brought all the good old habits with her, and practices them as regularly as she does her music."

"Ah! she does, does she? Good child. Here comes Senator Glynn—my niece, Senator Glynn, my only sister's only child."

Mrs. Lasselle looked at Mrs. Lyle, and both were agast. This common little personage who did her own work was no other than niece to one of the first generals of the age. Was ever pride so extinguished? Was ever mortification so crushing? Certainly if Mrs. Lasselle had not entirely forfeited the esteem of Harry Moore's wife, she had done nothing to gain it; for, as she looked back, her coldness seemed insult. The young man by her side

appeared cowed on a sudden. He remembered the face of Nora now, and recollected also that she could not have forgotten him or his former station. He was spared the necessity of introducing the fair lady, however, for the snuffy Lasselle, himself fairly radiant with dust, his brow streaming with perspiration, and his white gloves dubiously colored somewhat to the shade of a dirty Meerschaum, entered, and, taking advantage of a leisure moment, almost dragged his reluctant wife to the general, and presented her. But the cordial hand pressure of the noble old man proved no balm to her, and she retired to her own room, angry with herself, and disgusted, for the time, with her surroundings.

Of course the whole house was in a state of intense excitement, and Nora found herself the recipient of attentions so new and numerous as

to appear rather questionable. However, the little lady—for true lady she was—gave offence to none, though she saw through artifice and stratagem; and when she left the A—— House, on an urgent invitation of her uncle to spend the summer at his country seat, she took leave of all alike, and extended her courtesies impartially.

Mrs. Lasselle and Mrs. Lyle had, however, both learned a lesson that was profitable for their future, and showed them the injustice of condemning on prejudice.

As for Nora, she is known to this day in the A—— House as the lady who did her own work, and husbands hold her up as a pattern when their wives complain of lassitude and *ennui*. I am happy to say that, in many respects, her rare example has been followed.

"I suppose so. Do you know, Julie, I like your nation! I admire their straightforwardness; and their coarse phrases—for they are coarse—which they have coined, are more characteristic of them than anything else you have. When you become a monarchy and have a hereditary nobility, you'll be worthy to rank with us Europeans."

Of course I made the usual answer that our nobility held its own, in virtue of merit—that in our country moral and intellectual superiority were the only passports to popular favor, etc.—yet haunted all the time by a consciousness of Mrs. Parsproud, whose palace on Fifth Avenue is the resort of the elite of the metropolis, although Mrs. Parsproud hasn't two ideas in her head, and has no more principle than a Carib. I had, too, a dim impression that Mrs. Brahmin, whose great-grandfather was a lineal descendant of Vishnu, and whose maternal ancestor was own son to Lord Lyndhurst's valet, might, by the bare fact of her existence, militate somewhat strongly against my theory; but those were the days of my childish simplicity, when I innocently imagined that ideas represented things. So I swallowed down my ghosts of doubts as confidently as if my moral sense had possessed the toughness of cala.

"How very absurd!" said Christine, indignantly, when I had finished. "How absurd to assert that yonder swarthy little Bohemian, whose ancestors have been peasants ever since the middle ages, is equal to Lucia, in whose veins runs the best blood of England!"

"Or to Christine Rolke, whose mother wrote Von before her name," I added, ironically.

Christine's face flushed, and Lucia looked at me reproachfully. But Christine did not reply. She had that consummate prudence that stands so well in the place of genuine good temper. She always knew where to aim her shafts of satire and scorn, and hence, though she was famed for her power of saying sharp things, nobody feared but everybody liked Christine. Love her, they did not. Love is not for such as she. They must be content with ordinary, surface liking, which is a vastly more common and practical sentiment than love. When a few persons do love such people, as Lucia loved Christine, it does not argue their goodness, but rather that of the simple, trusting souls who cannot choose but love.

I repented of my rude speech in a moment, and asked forgiveness, which Christine loftily accorded.

"Now we are friends again," said Lucia, with her sweet smile.

"How good tempered you are!" said Christine, admiringly. "You, who have both rank and wealth, can afford to be; while we, who have only one or neither, must needs be vexing ourselves at every trifle."

It was my turn to be angry now; but Lucia did not notice Christine's thrust at me, and asked gently:

"Would you like so much to be rich, Christine?"

She drew herself up with her queenly air, and answered:

"Would I not? I would like to map myself in ermine, and flash in gems. I would like to repose on velvet couches, and breathe airs laden with fragrance. And I covet power, too. I would like to preside over a sumptuous household and entertain lordly men at my table. I would like to know that my smile or frown influenced the destinies of a nation, and that my caprice could exalt or depress them."

"You should be the stately wife of the English premier," said Lucia, smiling.

"Or of some intriguing French courtier," I added.

"Or some shrewd Yankee politician," sneered Christine.

Lucia interposed. "I wish I could give you a taste of English country life, Christine. You would like us too, I think. You should have pictures and statuary, and luxurious furniture, to your heart's content. You should have horses and carriages and maid servants," she said, playfully. "Wont you go home with me, Christine?"

I hoped she would refuse, for I was tired of our daily combats and longed for an armistice. I was a waif upon the world, and in the interim of finding a governess's situation, had been glad to accept Lucia's invitation to spend a month with her at her father's country seat. Perhaps I might find a place to suit me in some English family, and then I need not cross the ocean again. All my most cherished associations were on the European side of the Atlantic. My friends were there—it was home to me, and my feeling for fatherland was only a romantic, unpractical sentiment, not strong enough to control my actions.

But while these thoughts were running through my mind, Christine had decided to go to England. I have no doubt she had meant to do so from the time it was first proposed; but now she announced the determination as if it were impromptu.

"I think I will go with you, Lucia."

Lucia sprang up delighted.

"O, Christine! will you really? That's a darling girl!" And she danced about, as gaily as Annette might have done.

"Only you must promise that Julie shall not quarrel with me," said Christine, freeing herself from Lucia's embrace.

"O, Julie will be good! I'll get Theodore to take her in charge."

"Ah!" Christine looked into Lucia's face.

"He's only a cousin, my dear!"

"Only my cousin," said Lucia, blushing like any rose.

But I knew that he was a betrothed lover, and that our little English daisy loved him with all her heart. Many a moonlight eve, when the quaint old towers of Brussels shone whitely in the clear light, had Lucia told me tales of Theodore Barleigh, her playmate from childhood and her husband, if God willed. I had formed a very exaggerated notion of this piece of masculine perfection, as I afterwards found. Looking at him through the double medium of my own and Lucia's imagination, I had fancied that no

king or statesman was his peer. But I am anticipating.

So Christine was going to England. Why should she not, when, as she truly said, she had not a friend in the world who would inquire for her the day after her departure? But why should she go? I had always thought she was qualifying herself to teach French in her own native city of Frankfurt.

"Christine?" I said, inquiringly.

At that moment Madeleine St. Hilaire rang her bell, and when the chattering ceased, said in her sharp tones:

"It is time for the promenade, demoiselles. You will meet here at seven to-morrow for rehearsal. Adieu!"

And I followed the rest out, wondering why Christine was going to England.

The next day, the whole large house was in a confused bustle of preparation. In the morning the grand exhibition took place, and every corner of the school-room was crowded. It was a great success, and madame's eyes sparkled with gratified pride and the prospect of future gain. A prize was to be awarded for the best French theme, and we were none of us disappointed when the name of Christine Rolke was announced as that of the successful competitor.

Christine was not beautiful or amiable, nor even a coquette, and yet she had her admirers among the Brusselian youth; and when, with an unwonted flush upon her cheek and with her majestic air, she walked down the passage and ascended the estrade, a loud burst of applause rang out from the great audience. She bent her head, and the director threw the ribbon over her neck and the glittering prize fell at her side. She lifted her eyes, threw one swift, sweeping glance over the hall, and then returned to her place. The long-fringed eyelids haughtily dropped, and except the unusual color, she was apparently wholly unmoved.

But it was a proud moment for Christine, and I knew that her heart beat high with exultant pride.

After the award of the prizes, there was little to hold the attention of the spectators, and the exercises were hurried through. Once free of the school-room, the young ladies hastened to join the troop who had worked all day at the scenic decorations. The folding-doors between the school-room and the adjoining recitation apartments were thrown open, and the place quickly assumed the appearance of a tolerable theatre. The stage was erected at the extremity of Monsieur Lenoire's room, and the French teacher himself was busy in overseeing the arrangements. Lucia and I had no role assigned to us, and we wandered at our pleasure about the house, gathering flowers, assisting in the green room, and walking up and down the cool alleys of the garden. Towards seven, Christine came running down the linen walk.

"Come in, Lucia," she exclaimed hurriedly. "You promised to assist me in my toilet." And she unconsciously pushed me aside and appropriated Lucia to herself. I followed them to Christine's apartment and sat down, quietly watching the long anuburn curls as they shaped themselves into lustrous coils under Lucia's skilful fingers. Christine placed herself before the mirror, and as she did so, I noticed that she smoothed out the wrinkles which her late excitement and haste had occasioned, and assumed a more placid expression. It was not favorable to her beauty, which, apart from her regal carriage and figure, and the rich, soft hair, lay rather in expression than in color and form. I have heard her called plain; but those who found her so could never have seen her when enthusiasm kindled her eyes and flushed her cheek. I did not think her beautiful that night when she left us, just before making her debut upon the stage; but when later, stimulated by applause and the consciousness of her own rich gifts, she threw the whole force of her nature into the representation of her part, I was led captive by her loveliness.

When we entered the improvised theatre, the best seats were already filled, and soon the spectators flocked in so numerously that the aisles overflowed, and even the window recesses were crowded. In front were the pupils, in every style of holiday costume, their light drapery waving in the wind, which came in cool and fresh at the windows, and the rounded arms of the English girls and the dark, piercing eyes of the Spanish maidens alike gleaming in the light. In the rear, and encircling them upon either side, were the friends and patrons of the establishment, and conspicuous among them was Madame L'Estrange, radiant in her pride and exultation at this new success. The room was flooded with light, the air sweet with perfumes, wreaths of gorgeous flowers encircled the pillars, and brilliant cloths festooned the walls. It was a gorgeous, festive scene, and when, presently, the curtain rose and revealed a magnificently furnished boudoir, in which stood Christine in her royal robes, and bearing herself so regally, the whole tableau was so enchanting, that the admiration of the audience broke forth spontaneously, and cries of "Charmant! C'est belle!" resounded throughout the apartment. Christine advanced a step, and faced the assembly; instantly every sound was hushed, and the silence, even more than the applause, confessed the effect which she had produced.

The play was a thrilling drama, founded upon one of those episodes in the life of royalty where the mainpring of interest is the working of those feelings common to all hearts, and which only derive an additional power from the prestige of rank. With the suffering queen, maddened by wrong and repaid where she should have been cherished, every woman in the house could sympathize, from Annette d'Olivet who flirted with the English teacher, to the Princess Alkoff who had that morning parted from her lord for the twentieth time. When in the last act, the queen, driven to despair, revenges her wrong and holds up in the sight of the spectators the poniard dripping with the blood of her rival, the effect was terrible, and no words could do justice to the impression produced. Could one be so transformed? Was that Christine—that pallid

face, those set lips, that almost demonic rage? The audience went wild. In French fashion, they gave themselves up to the delirium of the moment. Again and again Christine was called before the curtain to receive their delighted homage. Never had such amateur acting been known—rarely had any such professional success been achieved.

Among the audience there was one not a Frenchman, I imagined, though he threw himself into the enjoyment of the moment with a very un-English-like abandon. A slight figure, dark, with a crimson flush on his face—though that might be the effect of excitement—soft, violet eyes, scintillating with light—his whole appearance was novel and *distingue*.

Who could it be? I was familiar with the *habitués* of Brussels, and this was not one of them. He held in his hand an elegant bouquet, and when Christine appeared for the last time, the fragrant offering fell at her feet. She turned—I saw her glance fall upon him—their eyes met—and Christine bent her head. When I looked at her again, the whole look of the tragically queen was gone, and a graceful, beautiful woman stood there, modestly blushing at her praises. Who could the stranger be? I turned to ask Lucia, but the play was over, the company leaving, and a dozen rude girls had separated me from her.

I made my way out into the open air, almost dazed with the excitement. I walked around the balcony toward the private entrance. Turning a corner, I suddenly came upon a trio who stood chatting in the moonlight.

"Julie!" It was Lucia's voice, and then Christine's rich tones broke in: "Come, Julie, you are not such a Goth as not to admire these flowers!"

She held in her hand the very bouquet which I had seen her receive with so much *empressment*—and here, close by her side, stood the slight, elegant youth whose movements I had observed. Lucia put her hand upon mine, and with a charming, girlish hesitancy, introduced her cousin Theodore.

I was an awkward school girl, at the best, and my surprise only increased my discomposure; so as I responded shyly to his courteous remarks, I did not wonder that he ceased to address me, and devoted himself to Lucia and Christine. Lucia, indeed, drew somewhat into the shade. It was one of her daisy ways, and I loved her the better for it; but in this pushing, grasping world, he who shoves himself foremost, gets the greatest share of the good things, and so in that epitome of the world which we call society, the daisies and violets fall into the background, however fair and sweet they may be, and the flaunting hollyhocks and dahlias usurp the front rank.

Christine enjoyed her triumph, and they chatted on about a thousand things which could not interest Lucia, but in which Christine's *esprit* displayed itself to the best advantage. Theodore Barleigh had come over, partly on a pleasure tour, partly to await Lucia's return. Arriving at Brussels just before the exhibition commenced and after we were seated, he could not gain access to Lucia, he said, and pleased himself with surprising her among the crowd in the hall.

By-and-by I left them—and Christine followed me, to my surprise. We went up stairs, and as her apartment adjoined mine, she came in and stood before my mirror, unloosening the bandeaux of gems from her hair.

"Julie," she said, suddenly, "do you know I've found my vocation?"

I looked up. Her eyes were glowing, and her color was a vivid crimson.

"I shall go upon the stage," she said, determinedly.

"Why, Christine! with your aristocratic prejudices?"

"I fling them away—no, I hoard them—I'll keep them, and one day I'll win a right to a place among the highest, and by my own genius, too. Julie, you don't like me—but you own that I have genius?"

"Yes," I said, indifferently.

"Yes, I knew it, and before to-night. I'll use my power." She began to pace the room. "I'll not delve for my livelihood like a common person. I'll not spend any life in teaching French to dullards. You blame my ambition. It is my right. My mother wrote Von before her name. Julie, your sneer was directed against the truth. Isn't poverty a curse? It threw us down from our rank, it sent my father into exile, and my mother to the grave. It has driven me to the stage. No matter. My fame shall atone. What is better than fame, fortune, rank, won by one's own exertions?"

"Love—goodness," I answered.

"Pshaw, little Puritan. Now don't bore me with romance. I'll betake myself to my own domain."

"*Tes bien, mon soeur*," I returned, laughingly. She went away, humming an air.

"By the way, Julie," she said, putting her head in at the door again, "is Daisy engaged to this English knight?"

I knew Lucia had not told Christine, but something tempted me to betray the secret, and I answered shortly, "Yes." Christine laughed and shut the door. It was a strange laugh. I sprang up and ran to her room.

"Christine," I burst forth, passionately, "if you meddle in this, may God reward you."

"I hope he will. One doesn't like to work for nothing. But don't fret, my pious little Round-head. He may do as a demier resort, not otherwise," she said, coolly.

I clasped my hands together in anger. But of what use was it? It was like the surf beating the everlasting rock, only to dash itself to pieces. I lay awake long that night. Some hours later Lucia came up and took her place by me.

"Lucia, dear!"

"Yes, Julie."

It was dark, I could not see her face, but the tone was sweet and calm, and full of content. There were love and trust and joy in her heart, and I prayed God they might ever abide there.

It was a merry party that crossed the Channel! and landed on the English shores the next week.

Sir William Morland was a frank, hospitable gentleman, proud of his daughter, and valuing her more than anything else in the world. For her sake he gave a cordial welcome to Christine and myself.

It was curious to see how quickly Christine ingratiated herself into his favor, with what alacrity she resigned to him the most comfortable seat, with what changing affability she listened to his often-told story of his last success at the Derby matches, how patiently she bore his little caprices, and ministered to the gratification of his whims. She had the tact to conceal her art, and fairly surprised the simple-hearted gentleman into a genuine liking for her. Sometimes it puzzled me to account for the coolness with which she treated Theodore Barleigh. She left him to amuse himself when they were alone together, she was always busy if he wanted her to sing, and Theodore was forced to devote himself to Lucia. Since the exhibition night Christine had not shown the tragic side of her character. Her role now was that of the amiable, graceful woman, and in that part she could not rival Lucia. It was her genius that had awakened his enthusiasm, and when she ceased to reveal it he was disenchanted. So for the present my fears were at rest, but I knew that Christine had the power to re-kindle his admiration, and if it suited her purpose she would do so. I heartily wished her a thousand miles off, anywhere that she could not interfere with Lucia's peace.

I knew she had some definite aim in view, and that her conduct was all in accordance with some plan; but I was unused to coquettish arts and could not understand her. Afterward I understood her too well; but at that time I had only an indefinite, vague apprehension of something wrong.

My sweet Daisy, how happy she was all the voyage, more gay and vivacious than was usual in her calm, gentle temperament. When we landed at Dover, I thought if ever Theodore's heart had wandered from her, it had returned to its allegiance, for his manner was now so uniformly the expression of unwavering affection that I could not doubt his devotedness.

It was in the full ripeness of summer that we reached Roselands. Everywhere, in the thick forests and on the open plain, in the green vales and upon the rounded hills, in orchard and garden, in the blue heavens and over the crystal waters of the wave the spirit of beauty brooded. It was something to dwell in the midst of so much loveliness, to wander in the silent forest shades and sit, in the soft, summer nights, in moonlit arbors, coming from the quiet, formal old city, with vivid remembrances of its prime alleys, and stiff, unnatural trees, the free, unrestrained luxuriance of nature had for us a double charm. Christine unfolded wonderfully. The luxury that environed her seemed her birthright. She was at home amid it all, and she drew inspiration from the beauty about her. Her rare, novel loveliness caught a richer glow, her voice modulated itself to greater sweetness, and her genius flashed out more vividly. How could I ever have thought her plain, I said to myself. The whole household noticed the change.

"Christine has grown prettier since coming here," said Sir William, one morning at the breakfast table.

We had all risen except the baronet, and Christine had gone to dress for a ride.

"Pretty! Do you call that prettiness, that brilliant face, radiant with soul? I don't think Christine is pretty," said Theodore, his face flushing, and his eye kindling with spirit as he spoke.

Lucia looked up. The baronet laughed. "Perhaps I don't choose my words very well," he said, good-humoredly. "She is a splendid girl, you want deny. I wish we could keep her here."

I glanced at Lucia. She looked quite as usual. If any sorrow lay waiting for her in the future she did not see it. No dark shadow fell athwart her sunny way. Christine still tarried, and Theodore walked the room impatiently. Lucia went to hasten her and they presently entered the room together. The contrast was striking. Lucia's delicate, girlish loveliness had its charm, but Christine's imperial beauty surprised and took you captive. Theodore put her in the saddle, and she thanked him with a gracious smile.

They rode off in advance of us; all the morning they were alone together, and Christine's color was deepened, and her eyes gleamed with exultation when we once more rode up to the steps. From that day it was clear to me how it would be. Nature, impressive as Theodore's, kindle into flame at a glance, and no development of her character, no unamiable thing he might see in her, could now alienate his affection from her.

I was half wild with sorrow and indignation. What could I do? Lucia was blind—God help her! Of what use would it be to arouse her from her trusting dream? Theodore was always kind, and her unassuming temperament was constant. She did not see his color rise, his eye flash at Christine's coming. She did not notice the wavering voice, the dreamy quiver, or the enthusiasm which her presence could occasion. With her whole heart Lucia had loved him, and with her whole heart she believed in him. Could I speak to Theodore, tell him that this proud, ambitious woman would surely wreck his happiness? As well might I attempt with my weak hand to stay the sea in its tidal flow, as to turn his love away from her. Sir William? What would it avail? I would go to Christine herself, I said, passionately. She would scorn me, she would mock me. No matter, I would go.

I went to her room that night. Lucia was asleep, and Christine could not escape me. She was at her writing-desk when I tapped at the door, and she met me with a guilty frown. Her features hardened, however, into an expression of indomitable resolution. She assumed her light, careless air.

"Now, New England, you're come to give me a lecture, I know. Let me introduce you to the audience." And she took my hand and led me into the floor.

[Written for The Flag of our Union.]

CHRISTINE'S TRIUMPH.

BY AMANDA M. HALE.

In the spacious school-room, at Madame L'Estrange's Pensionnat for young ladies, the day before the annual examination, there was a great deal of chattering, laughing and running to and fro, an incessant trying on of costume and rehearsing of parts, and not a little disputing—the collocutors sometimes forgetting their acquired French and breaking into their own vernacular.

It was a motley group, quite picturesque in its variety, and artistically disposed. Here was Christine Rolke, a tall, superbly-shaped German girl, wearing the dress of the queen, which was her part for the next day—for the young ladies were to appear in a petite drama, composed for the occasion by Madame L'Estrange's versatile French teacher, Monsieur Lenoire.

The purple velvet mantle hung in rich folds about Christine's queenly figure, and she bore herself as if she really were a scion of royalty. Those were the days of the republic, and patriotic little French girls sometimes sneered at Christine's penchant for the aristocracy; but she did not mind—she paraded her predilections all the same, and took no pains to conceal her contempt for the *canaille*. At Christine's feet knelt our little English daisy, Lucia Morland—a blue-eyed, brown-haired maiden, modest in mien and graceful in every movement.

Flitting here and there, sometimes assisting Lucia in the arrangement of Christine's train, and sometimes stopping to admire the effect of her own grisette attire, was Annette d'Olivet, the French girl who was to play the part of lady-in-waiting to Queen Marie, known on common occasions as Christine Rolke.

"Voilà, Christine, c'est assez! Now look at me," And she spread out her hands, and set her little head on one side with the most comical air. *Foyez! ma petite blonde chapeau. N'est ce pas charmant?* Who would not be a grisette?"

"Not I," said Christine, scornfully.

"Pourquoi, madame?" said Annette, simply.

"Don't ask foolish questions, Annette," returned Christine, pettishly.

Annette winked her bright little eyes with a puzzled air, and whirled away in a waltz. Christine gazed after her contemptuously a moment, and then drawing her work-box towards her, sat down to mend a rent in her fictitious gold lace.

"These people have no more brains than so many wooden puppets," she said, in an undertone.

Lucia looked up quickly, as if she would have remonstrated with earnestness, but she only uttered the word—"Christine!"

"It's true," persisted Christine. "They're no ambition, no pride, no sense of propriety—real propriety, I mean. They're *au fait* in little things, the details of social life, I know; but in nothing else. There's Annette—she belongs to one of the best families in Brussels, and does not value her position in the least. She might as well be a bourgeoisie."

Christine glanced at me, as if she expected some rejoinder. It was a standing subject of dispute between us. I felt bound to maintain republican principles in virtue of my transatlantic birth.

"And why should she?" I said, with spirit. "All men are born free and equal. 'Liberté, Fraternité, Égalité!'"

Lucia laughed. Christine curled her lip.

"That's what you call a humpag. All men are not equal; if they were, I—"

"What would you do?" asked Lucia, brightening up a false pearl.

Christine laughed. "I'd emigrate to another planet. I'd sell my birthright cheaper than Egan did, and think I had got a bargain."

We all laughed, and Christine continued: "When I was a little girl, I had a young American for a tutor in history and English reading, and he used sometimes to hold forth those absurd democratic ideas; but I knew they were nonsense then."

"Was that the way in which you picked up so many Americanisms?" said Lucia.

I drew my hand away. "Christine, don't jest, I do want to have some serious talk with you."

"True then," she replied, indifferently, and giving me a chair, she seated herself upon a low stool in front of it, and folded her hands in mock humility. "Upon which one of my numerous misdeeds will it please you to hold forth upon this occasion?" she asked.

"You must know, Christine, what I mean. You cannot think that you are treating Lucia honorably—" I paused.

A slight sneer curled her lips, and she said, coolly:

"Proceed, I am all attention."
Her coolness was too much to bear. "Christine," I burst forth, "you will break Lucia's heart, you know you will."

She laughed. "A broken heart? I'd like to see one. The British Museum would pay a price for it. It would be the eighth wonder of the world."

"O, Christine, it is cruel of you to talk so. You cannot mean it. Love is everything to Lucia—she cannot live without it—and she is so innocent and unsuspecting, too!"

"It does take the edge off one's triumph a little, I confess," responded Christine, quietly. "I wish it were you, now. There would be some satisfaction in being your rival. But Lucia, she might as well be a statue."

"Her trust in you is all the more reason why you should not wrong her," I said, impetuously. "Perhaps it is. I have never considered the matter."

"Christine, how can you have the heart to do so?"

"I haven't any heart. That's a luxury I cannot afford to indulge in."

"You do not love Theodore, Christine?"

"You can't expect me to tell you that. Why, I haven't even told him yet," she returned, maliciously.

"But I know you do not love him."

"You doubt my capacity, I see. I'm inclined to think you are right."

"Christine, do you mean to marry him? Will a connection with him satisfy your ambition?"

"Now you are reasonable," she said, laughingly. "I don't mind taking you into my confidence a little bit. I don't know whether I shall marry him or not. Perhaps—why not? He is rich, and of good family, though a commoner. On the other hand, a colossal fortune would not come amiss with me, and a coronet is vastly becoming, don't you think so?"

"Then you mean to hold Mr. Burleigh in reserve, and if an earl with a greater fortune presents himself, you'll play Theodore false?"

"Precisely. In coming to that conclusion, you have exhibited an acuteness quite creditable to you. May I ask if you've any further suggestions to make?"

"None," I said, rising, "I only hope your earl will present himself forthwith."

"*Je vous remercie*," she replied, laughing, and I went away.

The next week the house was to be thronged with company, and I fervently hoped that there might be some one upon whom Christine could ply her arts successfully, provided it brought misery to no one else. In four days more a dozen trunks had been deposited in the hall, and half as many visitors unannounced in the guest chambers. On one of these days, at sunset, a coach drove up with servants in livery. Christine, Lucia, and I were alone in the library. We went to the window at the sound of wheels.

"That is Lord Daecres' livery," exclaimed Lucia.

"Lord Daecres?" It was Christine's voice.

"Yes; he is a friend of papa's. He lives in Devonshire. O, Christine, you should see his house. It is a perfect gallery of art."

Christine's eyes sparkled. "His lordship is a connoisseur, then?"

"He's a bachelor, too," added Lucia, smiling; "but then he's old and personally disagreeable to me."

"Is it the Lord Daecres who makes speeches in parliament?" I asked.

"I dare say, he has 'prodigious talent,' as papa says."

"O, I know," cried Christine, with animation, "he is the leader of the opposition, and the most eloquent speaker on that side."

"And he has a house in Belgravia, probably," I added.

"So much the better," laughed Christine.

At that instant the large bay window in the drawing-room adjoining came down with a crash, and Lucia, springing to the door which was ajar, exclaimed:

"Why, that was Theodore. Here is 'Maud,' which he has been reading, and there he is himself."

I followed her to the window. Theodore was pacing across the lawn, with a quick, excited step. He disappeared in the shrubbery, and Lucia said, untrusting:

"What can be the matter with him?"

"Perhaps he is going to be jealous of Lord Daecres," said Christine, with a wicked smile playing about her lips.

We did not meet Theodore again till dinner was served. He came in then, looking pale and weary, and as I followed Lucia's anxious gaze into his face, the tears came to my eyes at the thought of so much unrequited devotion.

Christine was brilliant and charming. At a characteristic *bon mot*, Daecres lifted his cold, gray eyes to her face, he had not noticed her before, and something like a gleam of admiration lighted them up. When the gentlemen joined us in the drawing-room, Christine was called to the piano. Music was one of her gifts, and that night she sang divinely.

Lord Daecres was fascinated, and his homage seemed to inspire her, for she outshone herself. His lordship lingered near the piano, and when she rose he led her to a seat and placed himself at her side. Theodore gloomed in a corner, and Lucia tried with sweet gentleness to draw him out of his moody humor. It was in vain. She could not scare the cloud from his brow, and I saw her sweet face grow and as she sat down quickly alone. By-and-by Christine withdrew her

attention from Lord Daecres, and he, perceiving it, politely took himself and his accomplishments to another part of the saloon. I saw Christine glance at Theodore and I knew the magnetism of that look would bring him to the vacant seat. It did, and with subtle art she sought to soothe his wounded love, and the cloud cleared away, his face lighted up with smiles, and Christine basked in the sunshine of tender looks. Lucia watched them with an expression of pained perplexity. She could not make it out.

This was the inauguration of a succession of like scenes. Lord Daecres was enthralled, and it was evident that a coronet would be at her disposal. What would she do? Could I doubt, after the revelation I had had of her heartlessness? And how would Theodore bear it? Would he return again to his love for Lucia? My heart sorely misgave when I thought of his intense, passionate nature, and how he had concentrated all the forces of his soul in one burning love for Christine. One day—it was a soft, September day, when the heavens bent lovingly over the glorious earth, and the golden sunlight flooded the landscape, and in all the air a serene peace brooded like a holy presence—on this day a hunting party had been made up in the morning, and the gentlemen were not expected home till late in the afternoon.

When the shadows grew deep and dark under the oaks, Lucia proposed to me a ramble in the park. I demurred. Christine had been missing since the last hour, and I had a vague fear that her absence might be in some way connected with Theodore. But Lucia insisted; and I could not find an excuse for refusing to go. We went along the forest paths, Lucia chatting gaily and breaking now and then into a song. But after a time she grew more quiet, and as we entered deeper into the seclusion of the forest, a soberness came over us, and we walked on in silence.

"Let us go to the Glen," said Lucia, at length. It was a wild, romantic spot, and with it were associated dark legends of love and hate and revenge. The servants at the house were superstitious in regard to it, and wondrous stories were afloat of strange shapes seen there in the gray of the morning light. Once before, Lucia and I had been there, and without difficulty we found our way through the mazes of the path. It was shut in on all sides by hills, and seldom visited on account of its inaccessibility. We entered the ravine by the usual way, and pushing aside the tangled boughs that overhung the path, pressed forward. Further on, just on the edge of a brook that rippled through the valley, the gray ruins of a rustic temple, built in the times of the first Morlands, offered a charming retreat. We were near the ruins, when Lucia, who was in advance, suddenly stopped.

"What's the matter?" I asked.

She did not reply. With another step I gained her side. She was pale and trembling.

"Lucia," I cried, alarmed, "what is it?"

"Hark!" she whispered.

I stood still and listened. There were voices, the tones came distinct and clear through the silence of the forest. Lucia clenched my hand. Her grasp was like that of icy fingers.

"Hark!" she whispered again—I with a shiver.

It was Theodore's voice that I heard in passionate, pleading tones.

"Christine, darling, speak! You have not played me false? Tell me that this shameful story is an infamous lie."

I put my arm around Lucia. I tried to draw her away—but she could not move—she was like one dead, only the dead are at peace and she suffered. For years the look of agony which was on her face that moment haunted me in my dreams.

"Christine," the voice went on, "Christine, my own beloved, God knows what I have sacrificed for you. Have I not yielded up honor, peace of conscience, everything for your love? When my perfidy becomes known I shall be branded as a despicable traitor—I am one—I know it, but it is for your sake. Only say you love me still, Christine, and I will tell Lord Daecres he lies to his face."

"Lord Daecres has spoken the truth, Theodore."

The words were said in Christine's own cold, cruel tones.

"Christine, Christine!" he shouted, and the appealing horror in his voice thrills me even now. "It is false, say it is false."

"It is true. I have promised Lord Daecres to be his wife."

There was a deep groan, so full of woe and despair that I shuddered at the sound, and then I heard him say:

"O, God, what is left for me now?"

Lucia unloosed my hand. "I must go," she murmured.

"Stay, Lucia, stay!" I put out my hands to restrain her, but in my terror I was scarcely conscious of what she did, and she glided out from the shade of the bushes, and on to the grassy bank where Theodore stood. She went near him.

"Theodore, you do not love me, but I love you, and I pity you. Do not let that cruel woman break your heart. O, Theodore, for the sake of what I was to you once, do not—"

She tottered forward a step. He extended his arms, but a shudder passed over her, and she would have fallen but for me.

"Well, you will not come to me," he said, hoarsely. "You are right; but, Lucia, I did not mean to do you this wrong. God is my witness."

She must have heard him, for a faint smile flitted over her face—he sank back—

"Theodore, Theodore!" I cried, in terror.

He sprang forward, he lifted her from the ground, and his tears fell like rain upon her face. She opened her eyes, and that love which is stronger than death, was in the look she gave him. She half lifted herself, a fearful, wonderful pallor overspread her face, her eyes closed—ay, forevermore. Theodore held her fast for one moment, he kissed her lips and cheeks tenderly, reverently, then he arose and turned to Christine. The low, calm voice in which he spoke was more awful than any outburst of passion.

"This, too, is your work, and mine. Will you not have joy in it? In your princely home will it never haunt you? Will your womanly

spirit find satisfaction in it? When you stand before the altar—when you promise love and fealty to Lord Daecres—think of it; think of that poor, broken heart, think of my wronged love, my unutterable remorse—think of it—think of this, Christine!"

He put his hand to his bosom, a gleam of steel dazzled me, a sharp, quick flash blinded my eyes, then a crash, a horrible, stunning sound convulsed the air. A loud, agonized scream from Christine, and when the smoke cleared away, I saw her bending over him, and the crimson tide of his life was staining her white garments. Christine, Christine, repentance comes too late! You cannot give him life again. She screamed and tore her hair in her agony.

"Forgive me, forgive! I loved you, Theodore! Too late, forever too late!"

And this was Christine's triumph. Years after, the gay world, which had marvelled alike at the rare beauty and impenetrable, cold reserve of Lady Daecres, read with surprise the following announcement in the *Morning Post*:

"We learn with deep regret that the beautiful and accomplished Lady Daecres has been pronounced by her physician, incurably insane. Lord Daecres has the sincerest sympathy of his friends."

almost worshipped at its shrine. He loved to see the white "Star of Bethlehem" peering meekly up among its long, green leaves, with the single white thread running through. He loved the March violet, the spring daisies; he loved, too, all that is majestic and grand in nature. He had stood and thrilled at the mighty voice that ever goes up from Niagara, and fascinated, tried to pierce the misty veil that hides its depths from mortal gaze. He was an orphan and alone in the world. Impulsive, impetuous, warm-hearted, he possessed true principles and a strong sense of the right. He was a college student, enjoying a summer vacation in his own peculiar manner. He was making a tour of the State of Connecticut, accompanied only by his good horse Selim, on whose back he now sat watching the clouds.

Looking earnestly he fell into a reverie, and heeded not the pawing of his impatient steed. But suddenly the reverie was broken, and he looked up hastily and glanced around, on hearing a succession of childish screams. A little house of wood-color, which he had been too absorbed to notice, stood on the right-hand side of the road. The screams, which came louder and faster, impelled him to spring from his horse, hastily slip the reins around a gate-post, and enter.

The front portion, as in most farm-houses, was closed tightly with green paper curtains, closely drawn. He took the foot-path, and with a few quick steps, found himself at the kitchen-door. The sight that met his eyes made the indignant blood boil in his veins. A woman (could she be a woman?) with a coarse, red face, flushed with angry passions, held in her uplifted hand a large hickory stick, and close grasped in her other hand was a mass of tangled curls, belonging to a trembling, cowering child of perhaps eleven years.

On seeing the stranger, the woman's hand relaxed, and with a quick bound the child sprang to his side and clasped his knee, looking up imploringly in the face bent towards her.

"Go out and finish picking chips now, you miserable child! I'll finish settling with you to-night," exclaimed the woman, angrily giving her frowny hair a backward push.

Evidently rejoiced to defer the punishment a few hours, the child went sobbing into the yard.

"Is she your daughter?" inquired Harry, somewhat embarrassed.

"I should hope not—such a lazy, shiftless thing! Here I set her to picking up chips, and the first thing I knew, she came up the lane with her arms full of medder weeds. No, thank for—

[ORIGINAL.]

THE WAIF:

—OR,—

HARRY'S YOUNG PROTEGE.

BY H. N. O'BRIEN.

It was about sunset of a summer's day. The weather had been hot and sultry, and to people whose business or employment was out of doors, it had been extremely unpleasant. In the glowing west there seemed banners of crimson fluted with gold flung athwart the sky; and piles of blue clouds, whose edges were tipped with silver, floated on either side. The sky seemed radiant with the amber rays struggling through, with pencil-like fringes reaching up as if to the gray beyond.

Harry Winthrop looked with a true artist's eye on the glowing scene. The color deepened in his pale student's face, and lighted up his dark thoughtful eye. He loved the beautiful—

tune, she's none o' mine." And the woman gave an impatient twitch to her sleeve, which was rolled above her brawny elbow.

"Who then is she?" asked Harry, sternly.

"Well, I don't see as it concerns you to know. I'd like to git rid of the lazy thing any way." The woman commenced a vigorous sweeping.

"Why do you keep her, if you don't want her? Would it not be better to give her away, or send her to the alms-house?"

"Law, sir, I wouldn't dare to. The neighbors would make a fuss. She was my husband's child, by his first wife—a terrible shiftless critter by all accounts; but John sot the world by her. The young un takes after the mother. When John died he gin me the farm, and I was to provide for the girl. I've two young uns of my own to take care on, and if folks wouldn't talk so, I'd put her in the poor-house."

Harry gave way to a generous impulse.

"Give her to me, if she will go," he exclaimed.

"I will send her to school and educate her as my own sister. Are you willing?"

The woman looked suspiciously at him, then hesitated.

"She shall be well taken care of," remarked Harry, noticing her hesitation.

"And brung up right?" asked the woman, leaning on her broom.

"I pledge you my honor." Harry's face flushed.

"And I wont have to spend nothin' on her?"

"No, you shall be relieved of all expenses. I am rich, and can do as I please."

"Well, if she is willing you can have her, but her services will be a loss to me. Here," she exclaimed, as the child entered with a full basket, "do you want to go away with this gentleman, Molly?"

The child's eyes absolutely flashed with delight.

"May I go, sir? Will you take me?" she exclaimed, almost incredulously.

"Yes—if you will go with me, and be my little sister," he answered, kindly.

The child caught up her sun-bonnet and hastened to the door.

"Can't you kiss me good-by, Moll? I would not let the girl go, if it wasn't goin' to be such a good thing for her. But it will be deprivin' me of her services, and I'm none too well off."

Harry laid a gold eagle on the table, which the woman saw with ill-concealed delight. She accompanied them to the gate, and assisted the child, who was very small of her age, to her seat in front of her young protector.

"Good-by, Molly, and if good luck comes to you, don't forget your friends."

In any person, however bad, we are told, there is at least one germ of good. In Mrs. Crown, Molly's stepmother, it was her love for her own children. It was her passion—no work, no hardship was too hard for her to endure for them.

As they rode along slowly, the child's head rested trustingly on Harry's breast. He began to have a delightful feeling, thinking how pleasant it was to have some one to protect and watch over. Looking down on the bare neck and arms, which were covered with stripes and wales, a sense of pity and indignation mingled in his breast.

"What is your name, my child?"

"Faith Crown. My mother calls me Molly," said the child, looking up.

"How old are you?"

"Most eleven, sir."

"Have you been to school much, Faith?"

"Not much, sir. But I'm a good scholar. I can spell lots, and read in the Third Reader. I know 'rithmetic, too."

Harry was amused.

"How much do you know of arithmetic?"

"I can add and multiply, and lots more. I never studied nothin' besides."

Harry mused a few moments, while the child was silent with a full heart, because of his kind words. Poor little one! she was unused to such, and the tears filled her eyes.

"There, you can most see the village, mister," said little Molly, anxious to entertain him.

"Look up, Faith, while I talk to you. Your name, henceforth, shall be called Faith Winthrop. Do you understand?"

"Yes, sir. What is your name?" she asked, timidly.

"Harry Winthrop. You may call me brother—no," he said, his fastidious nature revolting from too close intimacy and too great familiarity with such a sun-burned little thing—"no, call me uncle—Uncle Harry."

A stop of three days at the village hotel recruited all Harry's energies, and at the same time put Faith's wardrobe in good condition, for Harry engaged a competent dressmaker to clothe the child neatly and tastefully. When dressed, she was quite presentable. Her slender little figure in white muslin, tied with a pink sash-ribbon, looked very different from the ill-clad, wretched-looking farmer's daughter. Her hair was combed and hung in soft, silky curls; her little sun burned face had had the tears and dust washed away, and revealed a patient, subdued expression, with a fearful glance in the eye, and a quivering lip. Yet the face wore an innocent,

artless look, full of childish purity, and that pleased her young protector.

Since taking her, Harry Winthrop had once or twice called himself "a foolish boy," and wondered what his city friends would think of his adopted niece. But he had no one to love, no one to whom he was all the world. He felt that Providence had given him this little waif, and he resolved to train her for a useful life. What her future would be he did not pause to think. Her quaint manners, her odd, intelligent little speeches, decided him to educate her. Still he realized that his was an awkward situation—he, a college youth of twenty-one, sole and only guardian to a little child, ten years his junior.

He took her to the city in which his college was located, and placed her at a fashionable seminary, under the charge of an accomplished preceptress. His little protegee filled many a thought, and many were the plans he formed for her benefit. Although absorbed in study, and determined to be the first man in his class, and make his fellow-collegians recognize in him talent, and perhaps genius, he still found time to call on his little "Daisy," as he loved to call her, twice every week. Faith regarded him as a superior being, and loved him with a wild intensity, whose depths could not be sounded. Every kind word, all his little gifts, his brotherly counsel and caresses were treasured by the child, and served to brighten and strengthen the chain which united them. And her helplessness, her reverence for him, her innocence and purity, made him love her as if she had been his sister, and he sometimes felt inferior to her in the lore of angels. By the end of the year, her *brusquerie* and country awkwardness were partially dissipated. She had lost somewhat of her too great timidity, and began to show a thirst for knowledge.

Harry Winthrop's studies were finished. He had delivered the valedictory amidst marked applause. He had won high honors, and he had now the world before him. The dream of his life had been to travel, and now he was determined to see his dream fulfilled. No longer should it be a dim, misty vision, but a sweet reality. And so, bidding adieu to Faith and his other friends, he went to Germany to study.

Five years had passed over the hills and valleys of life, and Harry Winthrop, a bronzed and bearded man, with foreign air, strode again his native shore. Since he had left his *alma mater*, the suns of many different lands and climes had kissed his once pale cheek, and he had looked on ruins and stately edifices, and had learned to think. In rambling over the old world he had

first learned man's power and might, and his weakness and insignificance. He went a light-hearted student; he returned a grave, thoughtful, dignified man; a man who felt the importance of life, who realized his own native powers, and who was a man among men.

It was a June afternoon when he strolled up the seminary walk, and entered the chapel where hundreds were congregated. It was the last day of examination, and the young graduates were to read their essays before a criticizing audience. On the platform, but far back, were rows of seats, and eagerly did Harry scan each face to find his country blossom. Curly heads and dark eyes, sunny tresses and azure orbs—from all these how could he choose his Daisy? He knew it was her graduation day, and he resolved to watch the young girls, feeling convinced he would know Faith in a moment. A tall, stately girl, with raven hair and splendid oriental eyes, read her essay first. That could not be Faith. Next came a proud, haughty being, with a cold, reserved air. Then half a dozen passable-looking girls, by no means brilliant, but doubtless possessed of those qualities which make home happy. Mr. Winthrop immediately decided that Faith was not among them. Then, with a blundering air, came a short, plump girl, evidently the light of some farm-house—with auburn hair, blue eyes, a good-natured expression, but plain-featured, with a universal awkwardness. She shrank from reading her composition, looking around fearfully, the paper trembling in her hand, and a blush suffusing the healthy cheek.

That was Faith—so Harry decided. He did not doubt he was right, and he began to congratulate himself on the kind impulse which had led to her education, though no talent and but little close application to study could be perceived in her effusion. He was scarcely satisfied with her progress, but he determined she should study at home—for Harry owned an elegantly furnished mansion in his native city, which was now ready for the reception of himself and protegee.

The young lady whose turn came next, advanced with graceful self-possession, which Harry scarcely noticed, so busily was he thinking of the brown, plump country girl. But his attention was drawn to her well-turned sentences, the close thought, the nice distinctions, the evident love for the beautiful, the true talent displayed, and so well pleased was he, that he turned his attention to its author. She was of medium height, slender and graceful. Her hair was of a rich, sunny brown, and her eyes dark gray. He could only see the color for a moment, then the long lashes swept her cheek. He was struck by the

innocence and purity of the pale, earnest face. He looked at her, watched her movements, forgetting all else, and then he began to wish that Faith's school-days were not yet ended; he wished to leave her at the seminary. She needed further instruction, for her composition showed ignorance and a lack of reflection. He began to think he should hate to see her about his beautiful home, after seeing this girl, who, though she was not strictly beautiful, possessed a glorious soul. The country girl was so material beside this earnest young enthusiast.

Somewhat out of humor, he left the hall and found his way to the seminary parlor. Ringing the bell, he desired to see Miss Faith Winthrop as soon as the services were concluded, and then he gave himself up to thought. He heard the rush of departing footsteps, and he carelessly twirled the leaves of a crimson and gold album, as he heard light, approaching footsteps. He did not look up until he felt a pair of arms thrown around his neck, and a soft cheek pressed to his, and a sweet voice say, "Dear Uncle Harry!"

Somewhat offended at this display from a bread-and-butter school-girl, he gently unwound the clinging arms and looked—not into the face he expected, but the pale, earnest one he had seen with a little heart-fluttering.

"Is it possible that this is my Daisy?" he asked, almost incredulous, seating her by himself on a sofa.

"Quite possible, dear Uncle Harry," she answered, blushing. "I had almost given up your coming. You know you wrote me you would be here a week ago."

Harry did not think it worth while to inform her that the week had been spent in his city home, he, the while, chafing that his peculiar habits must be infringed upon by a romping girl. Neither did he consider it worth his while to tell her how he had dreaded coming for her, and blamed once or twice his "boyish folly" in removing her from her native sphere. He was angry at himself now.

Faith told him about her school-life, and said that her kind preceptress had offered her a situation as teacher, if she desired it, and she thought she would like to accept it. Mr. Winthrop quickly vetoed such an arrangement, by virtue of his authority, and Faith was not sorry. The next morning they were settled in their city home.

Mr. Winthrop had an excellent housekeeper, but conceiving it to be improper, in the eyes of the world, for his adopted niece to have no lady-companion, he said to her, a week after their arrival at their home:

"Now, Daisy, haven't you some school-girl friend you would like to invite to spend a year with you? You will be lonely oftentimes with only an old bachelor uncle, who must give half his time to his literary labors. You might invite two friends, Daisy, and then you shall enjoy yourselves in society."

Faith was not fond of gay society, but finding her guardian really in earnest, she wrote to two of her school-friends, and her invitations were speedily accepted. Mr. Winthrop had expected to endure a perpetual martyrdom after the arrival of the young ladies, and had resolved to bear it as best he might. But, greatly to his surprise, his study was never molested, the library was kept in order, and his literary labors were undisturbed by sounds of laughter and revelry, though the halls, the parlors, the drawing-room, and the young ladies' apartments echoed musical laughter and gay young voices.

The two guests of Faith Winthrop were very unlike. Bessie Randolph was a bright little Southern beauty, possessed of a fortune. She was an orphan, and had been a parlor-boarder at the seminary. She was a wilful, capricious, restless, little beauty, and she loved Faith devotedly, as much as she could and not disregard the claims of a college youth, with whom she became acquainted while at school.

Adele Vane was a tall, slender girl, with pale yellow hair—you could scarce call it golden—light blue eyes and fair complexion. She was the second daughter of a family of seven children. Her mother was dead, and her sister Charlotte took a mother's place with the wild, unruly boys, and the two girls, Adele and Ermance. Her supervision was especially distasteful to the proud Adele. Their father's income was small, and when the invitation to Adele arrived, the girl's heart gave a glad throb, and she inwardly resolved though she went away from home in a style displeasing to her tastes, she would return the betrothed bride of a rich man. Faith had heard Adele say that she was unhappy at home, and her kind heart, rather than any affection, prompted the invitation. Adele was unscrupulous as to what means she employed to gain the end for which she sighed, and she had not been in the house two days, ere she was determined to become mistress of it, and the wife of the grave, dignified man who owned it. He was wealthy, and a fit target for her arrows.

With winning grace she tried to induce him to join their social circle, and enjoy their music and gay chats. He complied so far as to introduce a number of friends to them, and to give them a grand party. Then he became more than ever

studious and taciturn. Sighing, Faith thought of that first week at home—its quiet tete-a-tetes and morning walks; the music, in which his deep, rich voice joined hers, and the pleasant readings aloud of new books.

She was half buried among the cushions of a huge easy-chair, in her own sitting-room, and her friends were with her. Carrie was embroidering a pin-cushion, and Adele was busy with canvass and worsteds.

"Faith, dear," exclaimed Carrie, "your cushion progresses beautifully. I wonder for whom Adele is making those slippers? Do tell us, Adele," she said, turning to Miss Vane.

"You shall know sometime, but I shall only tell you now that I shall give them to my lover."

"Your lover! Not here a fortnight, and yet you have a lover?" cried Bessie, in astonishment.

A peculiar smile wreathed Adele Vane's lips, but she answered not.

Though very different, the three girls were each possessed of a share of youthful beauty. If one were to compare them to stones, you would say that Adele was a diamond; brilliant, though neither beautiful nor witty enough to merit the simile, but she was showy. You would call Bessie Randolph a ruby, bright and sparkling. Faith Winthrop would remind you of a pearl—a pure human pearl was she. In society they all attracted admiration, and so were soon absorbed in the whirl of fashionable life. Many ladies offered to play chaperons to the three belles, and thus Mr. Winthrop was rescued from attending them, save at his own pleasure.

One morning he accompanied them to a large party given by one of his lady-friends. He had meant to enter the room with Faith, but in a way unaccountable to himself, he found Miss Vane leaning on his arm, and Faith was with a very fine-looking gentleman, who seemed absorbed in her remarks. Bessie was with a fop, whose forked moustache had evidently received more cultivation than his brains. He was disappointed; and still more, that he found no opportunity to speak to her. She was all the time surrounded, and he longed to hear the animated tones; but Miss Vane, too, was the centre of a delightful coterie, and she still was leaning on his arm. After that evening Mr. Winthrop's studious habits were confirmed, and the girls soon found that all entreaties for him to indulge in society were met by a smile, or perhaps a sarcastic speech. Bessie did not mind this, but the others did. Adele, because it tended to discourage her plans, and Faith because she saw so little of him, except at table. They were all sitting in the parlor one evening, when visitors were announced.

"Mr. Hastings," whispered Adele to Faith, in a tone intended for Mr. Winthrop's ear. "Why, Faith, you haven't seen him since last evening at the opera. He finds in you his beau ideal, I heard him say. There he comes." And she turned to greet the gentleman with a smile.

A blush mantled Faith's face, as Mr. Winthrop gazed searchingly at her, and he too turned to his visitors with a pale face and white lips. He watched their manners to each other, and became convinced that Mr. Hastings loved his ward. The blush he considered proof positive that that love was returned.

Adele was carrying on a gay conversation with the fop who had played the gullant to Bessie, and during the conversation, she made many allusions to "the family mansion," the avenue leading to the house, "the plate" and the jewelry she had inherited. Mr. Trenton, believing her rich, began to pay her exclusive attention. Adele had heard he was rich, and so encouraged him, believing it better to have "two strings to her bow." How would the aristocratic Mr. Trenton have rated himself had he known "the family mansion" was a two-story cottage, "the avenue," a stone footpath, "the plate," a dozen silver spoons and forks, the "inherited jewelry," a watch and chain left her by her mother? His prolific fancy conjured up a magnificent structure of huge dimensions, with a lawn, a park, a carriage-drive; a table laden with all the delicacies of the season, and Adele herself the fair queen of all; the idol of her father, with a necklace of diamonds around her throat, a tiara on her head, bracelets on her arms, and a general profusion and display of miscellaneous gems. The pictures surely were very unlike. Adele did not mention her brothers and sisters, but left him to conclude she was the sole heiress. But if he had known that Mr. Vane was an honest, intelligent shoemaker, in tolerably good business for the small place, he would have returned to Bessie, whose lack of pretension and boasting had made him think her poor.

Bessie, Faith and Mr. Hastings enjoyed themselves in conversation, and did not heed the flirtation going on in the bay window. When the guests had departed, the girls sat in the drawing-room, and criticised the gentlemen, while Faith performed the part of listener. Adele Vane had been saying that Mr. Hastings was conceited, and thought himself superior to most men. To this Faith answered, for she always spoke in behalf of the absent, if there was occasion for defence.

"Adele, I am sure Mr. Hastings is superior to most men; and is it not natural that he who

knows the power of his own mind, should feel it too? He is superior, but not conceited, Adele. If you knew him better, you would not say that. Of all the gentlemen who are attentive to us, he is the most of a gentleman, in my opinion."

"Mine, also," chimed in Bessie.

"I am glad to see that you entertain such a high opinion of him, for he considers you an angel," remarked Adele, carelessly.

Faith blushed.

"I am glad you appreciate him, Faith," said the kind voice of her guardian, at her side.

"Uncle Harry, when did you enter the room?" exclaimed the young girl, in astonishment.

"I have been here since you began talking of Mr. Hastings; I did not suppose the conversation private, or I should have spoken before."

He seated himself on a sofa near Adele. Faith turned her attention to Bessie, and in a moment, arm-in-arm, the two retired to their own apartments, leaving Mr. Winthrop and Adele together.

Nearly six months had passed away, and Adele Vane's object was not accomplished. Mr. Winthrop had not proposed for her hand, and she determined to adopt some decisive measure. The foppish Mr. Trenton still hovered in her footsteps, still considered her "divinely charming, 'pon honaw." He would long ago have proposed for her hand, but her conduct was variable—sometimes encouraging, sometimes repellent, just as her hopes or fears concerning Mr. Winthrop predominated. Then Mr. Trenton put on "property airs," and vowed revenge when the fortune and its fair, imagined possessor should be all his own.

Bright, sunbeam Bessie Randolph made music throughout the whole house, and her presence consoled Faith for the unpleasant addition to their society in Adele Vane. Faith's pure mind each day found something to regret in Adele, but she never spoke of it.

It was the week before Christmas, and the servants were busy preparing dainties. Faith had no more to do with the kitchen than her guests, but she loved to concoct some favorite dish for her guardian, and her presence was always hailed with delight by the housekeeper and her assistants. Adele Vane was very shrewd, and had discovered that it was Faith who prevented her becoming mistress of Winthrop house. She saw that as man seldom loves, Mr. Winthrop loved Faith, and that he thought himself disliked by her. This latter idea she wished to strengthen, and on every occasion she contrived to join Mr. Hastings's name to Faith's. Faith

had told the girls the circumstances of her real life, and that she had no claim on her kind guardian.

One afternoon, the week before Christmas, Faith sat in the library alone. She had been reading the poem "Childe Harold," and unconsciously she repeated:

"The day drags through, tho' storms keep out the sun,
And thus the heart will break, yet brokenly live on."

She looked out of the window, trying to recall the picture she had read. It was a cold, sleety day; the wind blew, and out of doors the gray hue made it seem peculiarly unpleasant to one who sat as did Faith, surrounded by books, pictures, and elegant statues. It was a cheerless day, and sometimes a soft, slow, drizzling rain pattered against the windows, and obscured the next houses, and even the leaden-hued sky. Her thoughts took their tone from the weather. She remembered her sad childhood, and in thankfulness she lifted her eyes, as if trying to pierce through the misty rain, up to where the rain never falls, and all is sunlight, radiant, beautiful. She looked back through the aisles where her feet had wandered; she saw the shadows and sunshine that God had given her, and she saw the flowers as well as the storms. She looked to the future. The shadows were thick in the large, dim library, as she asked herself, "What shall be my future? Bailey says:

'The heart is its own Fate. Passion is destiny.'

What shall mine be? I am not fulfilling the end for which I was created, idling on silken cushions, and with no thought for the higher things of life. I want intensity, depth, individuality to this life of mine. To live, not to exist; to strive, to battle, to conquer. I am not satisfied with my life," she exclaimed, her face glowing, the color coming and going.

"Miss Faith," said the housekeeper, entering after a preliminary rap at the door, "there is a poor boy in the kitchen, begging for cold victuals and old clothes. Have you any old dresses, or anything for his mother, ma'am?"

"I will go and see him, Mrs. Williams," said the young girl, rising and accompanying her.

A little boy with ragged clothes and tattered hat, and shoes with plenty of holes for ventilation, unkempt hair and honest, clean little face, stood near the door, with basket in hand. A few questions from Faith drew out a story, touching, and artlessly told. The mother was sick, the father was drunk, the baby worried with teething, and the children were too small to work. Bidding the boy sit down, Faith filled the basket with bread and cakes, adding some dainties and

wine for the sick woman. The boy's eyes sparkled with delight, as he lifted his tattered cap, and exclaimed: "God bless ye, ma'am!"

In answer to a few questions more, he told her he was Johnny O'Flynn, and lived about half a mile away.

"Wait till I come back, Johnny," said Faith.

She entered the drawing-room and told the touching story to her guests. With characteristic generosity, Bessie half-emptied her purse in Faith's lap, but Adele said she did not like to encourage beggars.

Faith's pretty blue silk dress was soon exchanged for a quiet gray merino, and with hood and cloak she soon returned to the parlor. Bessie and Adele both declined accompanying her, and with one hand on the basket-handle, helping Johnny, and a small bundle in the other hand, Faith came up from the basement, passing the drawing-room window, unheeding the laughter of the two girls.

Half an hour passed dully enough to the two young ladies. Bessie reclined on the sofa, and Adele sat in the window. Mr. Winthrop entered with his favorite Review.

"Mr. Winthrop, you should have been here a few minutes ago," smiled Adele.

"Why so? Where is Faith?" he asked, now noting her absence.

"She's been hidden somewhere all day, until a while ago she entered to beg for a poor little fellow, who had all the troubles of Job," said Bessie.

"And a few minutes after, we saw her facing the wind, helping an Irish boy carry potatoes, or some such thing," continued Adele, adding: "I cannot see how a person with any delicacy could do so—making herself a sport to the gentlemen who see her." Mr. Winthrop looked grave.

"Faith out in this storm—she is a noble girl!"

Meanwhile Faith was rocking a baby in her arms and soothing it to sleep. The mother, too, was sleeping, and at a table near were half-a-dozen children eating heartily. The mother slept for hours, and woke refreshed, to find the stranger lady still holding the baby and reading aloud from the Book of books to the children, and to a dirty-looking man with a pipe in his mouth, whom the children called "father."

The rain grew heavier, and it was almost dark, so Faith left them, promising in answer to Mr. O'Flynn's uncouth, though well-meant invitation, and his wife's more urgent one, to come again soon. Johnny walked home with her. He was only ten years old, and his warm, Irish imagination was enkindled by the sight of her pale, innocent face, and with boyish ardor he began to love the gentle girl.

Arrived at home, Faith went to her own room, and was soon clad in dry clothing. Mr. Winthrop, unaware of her return, admiring her self-denial, was pacing the library with firm, quick tread, pale face and uneasy air. Sometimes he paused to listen if he might hear her footstep. He had questioned the housekeeper, but she did not know in what direction the boy lived. The servant had lighted the pendant lamps in the library; the evening meal had been eaten without their kind host, who still walked, head bent forward, hands clasped behind him, to and fro across the library, crushing the gorgeous velvet flowers under his heavy tread. His noble face was shrouded in gloom, his lips were compressed.

Suddenly his cheek fluttered; he heard a light footstep that he knew. Not caring to betray his emotion, he stepped into a niche, in the shadow of a full length statue of Minerva. Faith entered, smiling sadly; he noticed it with a pang at the heart. Robed in a soft gray silk, which well suited her dovelike beauty, Faith stole to the window and pressed her cheek to the glass. There had been a coldness in Mr. Winthrop's manner to her for weeks, and she could not tell why. Thinking thus, the tears blinded her eyes. She determined to go back to the seminary and become a teacher—with a low, gasping sob, as she resolved on that step, Mr. Winthrop came forward.

"Faith, you should not have been so carried away by such a benevolent impulse, as to go out in such a rain," he said, reproachfully.

"But, Uncle Harry, I think I did some good," answered Faith, meekly.

"I don't doubt it, Faith, but you must have regard for your own health. I wish to talk to you. I received to-day from Ralph Hastings an offer for your hand. I believe he had your heart long ago. I need not tell you, Faith, that he is wealthy, talented, good and noble, for your heart will tell you the last, and I know you too well to suppose wealth would influence your decision. I promised to talk with you, and I told Mr. Hastings to call this evening for his answer. You will see him in an hour, Faith." Mr. Winthrop's tone was cold, hard and reserved.

Adele Vane had been insinuating that Faith loved Mr. Hastings, and that her health was injured by letting "concealment, like a worm in the bud," etc. Mr. Winthrop had remembered that Faith's form had grown slighter, her face whiter and purer, her eyes shining with a light which had nothing earthly in it, but a radiance which perchance was a foreshadowing of the glory of the beyond. He had noticed, too, the wistful quiver of the little mouth and its thin lips, and had sighed as he saw the transparent hands

and the pure forehead, through which the blue veins showed so plainly. He had thought from Adele's words, that this was owing to her love for Mr. Hastings, and the uncertainty as to that gentleman's feelings for her.

"Faith," he continued, "Mr. Hastings will be here soon, and I will leave you to think the matter over seriously, though of course there can be but one answer." He turned to leave the apartment.

"Stay, dear Uncle Harry," exclaimed Faith, with an effort; "will you not give him my answer. A spasm convulsed her guardian's face, as he answered, in a strange tone:

"You know not what you ask." Then he rapidly paced the apartment several times—then stood before her. "I will tell him, Faith, that you accept him. Will you see him this evening?"

"No, sir; and I hope you will not tell him that I accept him either. Please decline his offer in my name, sir."

"Faith, are you insane? Will you do violence to your own heart? Will you voluntarily darken your own life?" asked her guardian, with a strange mixture of wonder and misery in his tone.

"I do not love him, Uncle Harry," said Faith, gently.

"Not love him! Is it possible?"

"Quite possible, Uncle Harry."

"Don't call me 'Uncle Harry' again, Faith. I—but I hear Hastings's step in the hall. Come down to the library in an hour, Faith. I wish to talk with you."

Faith flew silently and unobserved to her own apartment. An hour had passed when her gentle face appeared at the library door, but it blanched to a death pallor, when looking in, she saw her guardian sitting on a cosy sofa, and at his side sat Adele Vane. Mr. Winthrop's feet were ensconced within the canvass slippers Adele had embroidered. He was listening intently to her words.

"Ah!" thought Faith, "he wished to tell me how he loved Adele Vane." And she stole back again to her own room.

The rain pattered against the windows, the wind shook the blinds and shutters, and Faith looked out until the city clocks struck twelve. Restless, she knew not why, she lighted a small hand-lamp and stole down to the library, in search of an odd, antiquated book, which she had seen on a certain shelf, in the further corner. It was a book of magic and sorcery, such a one as to frighten such a timid dove as Faith was, but she wanted something exciting, something to subdue her restlessness. She stood with the lamp in her hand, when the door again opened,

and Mr. Winthrop entered. Faith started, as did he, in surprise that it was no burglar, as he supposed.

"I was restless, and came here for a book," said Faith, in reply to his questioning glance.

"Why didn't you keep your appointment with me to-night, Faith?"

"You were too busily occupied to see me, Mr. Winthrop. I came, but did not wish to interrupt you."

"Interrupt me! O, I understand, it was when Adele was in here. Tell me now, Faith, why you rejected Mr. Hastings." His tone was eager.

"Because I did not love him enough to be his wife," answered Faith, coldly, turning to go.

"Wait a moment, Daisy. I have been trying to think if this be a coquettish whim." His keen eyes searched her face.

"No, sir, it is no whim. Perhaps, Mr. Winthrop, as I have few chances to speak to you alone, I had better now say that I wish to return to the seminary as teacher. I think I had better go next week. Good night, sir."

In perfect astonishment her guardian looked at her.

"Will you not stay, Faith?"

"I cannot, sir—I ought not," she cried, gently.

"You must, Faith—you must not go. Will you leave me who love you so?" he cried.

Faith leaned against the books.

"Daisy, I love you better than my own soul; will you be mine?" His tone was eager and passionate.

"Do you not love Adele Vane?" asked Faith, in a low tone, lifting her head from his shoulder.

"Love Adele Vane! No, indeed, darling, I love you, and you alone, with a fervor and devotion of which I have been afraid. Mine—mine, my birdie," he said, exultingly, as she disappeared up the winding stairs.

Adele Vane was too well-bred, too heartless besides, to show any mortification, especially as she vainly believed that her host's keen eyes had not penetrated her schemes. She encouraged Mr. Trenton, who delightedly proposed, and begged the engagement might be a short one. And then, for her plans were but half-accomplished, she by tears, hints, and successful manoeuvres, tried to prevail on Faith to allow the wedding at Winthrop house. This, the fair blushing Daisy did not feel authorized to grant, but Mr. Winthrop, who saw it all, quietly told Miss Vane that it would give him pleasure to have her marriage solemnized in his house.

One bright January eve, in the presence of many guests, Adele Vane became Adele Trenton, with solemn vows and promises. Her two young

friends were her bridesmaids. Bessie Randolph looked like a glorious picture of morning, so bright, so beautiful was she—and Faith like a holy twilight, uttering a holy quiet over all human thoughts and emotions that were sinful; calming one, and making one feel purer, better, and more thoughtful. Faith was one of those who live near to Jesus, who each day grow better and more like the angels.

They visited Adele's home; but there vanished all the proud air-castles of Mr. Trenton's brain. He reproached his bride, who told him that as he was rich, it could not matter. To her surprise, she was informed that most of his wealth consisted in unpaid debts, and he was getting ashamed to meet his tailor. The journey that began so happily, ended in their return to the city with mutual distrust and coldness.

Adele Trenton was present at a small gathering at Winthrop house in early March. The bright little humming-bird Bessie Randolph again enacted the part of bridesmaid, and a tall student's eyes followed her every motion with fond delight and pride. And the bearded, noble-looking man, with the slight form at his side, looking up with pale, earnest face, and pure, truthful eyes, they were Harry Winthrop and Faith his bride. And Adele Trenton sighed, and a faint wish, as faint as the shadow of a cloud on a quiet lake, stole in her mind, that she had lived a true life, been true to her better nature, and true to her God. But she banished the thought, and was as gay and brilliant as if no pain was gnawing at her heart-strings, and as if her life were not a living mockery. Mr. Hastings was gone to Maine on business, and he could not be present. From his joy Harry pitied Ralph Hastings. After the usual bridal tour to the Falls, to Washington, and the principal Atlantic cities, the bridal party returned to Winthrop house, and quiet peaceful happiness. It was pleasant for Bessie Randolph that her lover began to practise law in the city, and pleasanter still for him.

Living nobly up to their high standard, and walking with loving hearts through this earthly pilgrimage, are Harry and Faith Winthrop.

JESSIE TURNER'S FORTUNES.

BY METTA VICTORIA VICTOR.

CHAPTER I.

CREAKING, creaking, with a most doleful sound, the sign-board of the inn at the Four Corners swung dismally in the melancholy wind of an autumnal evening. The inn was a rambling wooden building of good size and age, standing at a corner where two stage-routes crossed each other, and designed to catch such stray custom as these thoroughfares might yield. A dozen or more of dwelling-houses, a store, a grocery, and some shops clustered about, went by the name of the Four Corners, and was honored by a post-office thus designated upon the list.

Jessie Turner, as she sat in her little bedroom on the first floor, looking out upon the night, did not think the creaking of the sign-board disagreeable; it only added to the wildness of the darkness and the moaning wind, she thought; and she loved to indulge in fantastic dreams, as changeful and capricious as the flickering light which went and came in her apartment. For nearly opposite her window, and just across the street, was a blacksmith's shop, the ruddy glow of whose furnace illumined the street, and, whenever its fire started into greater energy, broad dashes of crimson light were flung upon the walls of her room, or flashes of gold went glimmering through its shadows. On a dark night like the present, when the wind was abroad and rain threatened, she found beauty in the old shop, with its showers of fiery sparks, its red glow, and the wild shadow of the brawny smith as he worked at his anvil. With her cheek leaning on her hand, Jessie looked out, repeating to herself that exquisite picture of Longfellow's:—

"And children coming home from school
Look in at the open door;
They love to see the flaming forge,
And hear the bellows roar,
And catch the burning sparks that fly
Like chaff from a threshing-floor."

But even this did not satisfy her vivid imagination, and she dreamed on vaguely about Orion, and Vulcan, and the ancient poetry of mythology, murmuring some lines from Horace:—

"And here the god could take,
Midst showery sparks and swathes of broad gold fire,
His lone repose, lulled by the sounds he loved," etc.

And so absorbed was she in the fantasies thus conjured up, and such a tumult was made by the swinging sign, the clamor of the anvil and bellows, and the shrieking of the rising wind, that she was unaware the stage had stopped in front of the house, the horses had been changed, and it had been driven on towards the village, six miles distant. Suddenly her door opened, and a man who might once have been fine-looking, but now with a red and besotted face, looked in, and said: "A gentleman for supper. Be quick about it, Jessie."

She went out into the next room, which was the dining-room, and where a fragile-looking lady, who sat by the fire, was putting away some sewing.

"Do not come out in the kitchen until I have replenished the fire, do not, dear mother; for it is too chilly for you there now. All the help I shall need from you will be to make the biscuits, and I will call you when I am ready for you." And the young girl pressed the invalid back in her chair with affectionate assiduity.

"But how we are to get up a tolerable supper and breakfast, Jessie, is more than I know; the materials are not in the house."

"There is our last chicken, you know, which Tom dressed this afternoon, and, with the biscuits and honey, will make a respectable tea. Don't be troubled, mother; you will see when they are on the table."

She passed into the kitchen humming a song, started the decaying fire anew, and, for half an hour, flitted about busily from kitchen to dining-room.

"Now, mother, if you will just set up the dishes while I take off my apron and brush my hair," she said, and in two moments thereafter the stranger was ushered to the table by the half drunken landlord.

"I will wait upon myself, sir; I prefer to do so," said the gentleman, who did not like his company.

When he first commenced eating, he seemed absorbed in thought, taking his tea unconsciously from the hand of Jessie, who retreated to her place by the side table and stood waiting to give such attention as he might require.

Of all the onerous and disagreeable duties strewn so thickly in the daily path of the inn-

keeper's daughter, there was nothing so repugnant to her modest and refined nature as this necessity for serving strangers. She did it gently and readily, as she did all things, but many bitter tears were shed recently in her own little room, when some order rudely given, or the coarse stare of some bad man, had shocked her sensitive spirit more deeply than usual.

Presently the stranger, having recovered from his abstraction, began to notice the exceeding neatness of the table, and the delicate manner in which its viands were prepared. He was agreeably surprised, for he had expected, at the best, but a coarse meal at this out-of-the-way Western tavern. His surprise was heightened to astonished curiosity when his glance, from scrutinizing the room, fell upon the maiden standing, sewer in hand, by the tea-urn at the small table. She had forgotten herself for the moment, and stood with head inclined listening to the wailing of the autumn wind. He had travelled through many countries, and, for so young a man, had gained much experience, but he had never beheld, in art or nature, a more exquisite picture than this so unexpectedly appearing before him; for Jessie Turner was very beautiful, and she had unconsciously taken an attitude of striking grace. The plain gingham dress could not conceal the rounded loveliness of her girlish form. Her head, slightly drooped and turned away in its listening attitude, was nobly set upon a graceful throat; the most of its redundant hair was knotted up behind, but enough curls of gleaming gold and brown were left to shade the roseate cheek and intellectual forehead. There was a refinement in her demeanor which the most fortunate lady of the land might have coveted, and which could not escape the appreciation of a cultivated eye. The stranger forgot to eat, and stared at her so fixedly that, when she at last looked up, a bright blush breaking over her cheek reminded him of his rudeness. He immediately cast down his eyes and began hastily drinking his tea.

"May I trouble you for another cup of tea?"

As she came for his cup, he remarked the smallness and delicacy of her hands.

"Well, I should say that here was a star strangely driven aside from its proper sphere," he thought. And when she handed him his tea, he spoke out, moved by something suggestive in the dreamy look of her face: "The wind has a wild sound to-night."

"Yes," she said; "I love it."

She, too, had spoken without reflection, and now was sorry that she had expressed any kind

of a sentiment to a stranger which might provoke farther conversation; so she retreated to her mother's side, who was sitting at her sewing-stand at the back of the room, and remained there until the meal was finished.

When he entered the room, the traveller had bowed to the person who sat sewing, without particularly remarking her appearance, for he was, as we before observed, very much engrossed in his own reveries. Now, as he finished his repast and arose from the table, he decided upon the best means of gratifying his curiosity with regard to his beautiful attendant, and, with a courteous inclination to the landlady, he said: "With your permission, I will sit here a short time. The host says that I cannot have a fire in my room, and I do not like the tobacco and noise of the bar-room."

His request was pleasantly acceded to, and, for five minutes, he busied himself conjecturing what position the delicate lady who was politely answering his remarks about the weather could hold in this inn, whether she was boarder, guest, or what? When Jessie, who was flitting in and out, clearing away the table, at length called her mother, it was still almost impossible to credit that these two interesting women could be the wife and child of the stolid landlord who was dealing out liquor to his customers behind the bar in the adjoining room.

"Here is some romance of real life, and a painful one," he mused.

The conversation branched off from the weather upon several topics, and he found his companion not only refined, but unusually intelligent. He himself was agreeable and well-informed, and Mrs. Turner did not hesitate to converse freely with him. The interest was evidently mutual. In the midst of an animated conversation upon people and books, the daughter, having finished her work, took her place near her mother. She did not talk much, but her bright, expressive face, and kindling eye spoke for her. The astonishment of the traveller momentarily increased, and he would almost have put some questions to them concerning their personal history, but dared not. He learned incidentally that Mrs. Turner had come formerly from New York, where her husband had failed, and that she had lived out West but a few years. A shade of sadness upon her brow and in the depths of her eyes, which never left them, even when she smiled, told him silently of suffering of a mental kind quite equal to her physical ill-health.

Mr. Carolyn was the name of the traveller. He could scarcely have been twenty-five years

of age. They gathered from what he said that, after leaving college, he had made a flying visit to England and the Continent, stopping, however, a short time in Germany to complete some study there, that he had returned to his own country about a year ago, and had been travelling the most of the time, and was now going West to transact some business for his father.

Jessie Turner listened to his racy and brilliant remarks, almost entirely free from the vanity and superciliousness which young men who have travelled are apt to possess, with an admiration which spoke much more plainly from her earnest eyes than she was aware of. It was but seldom indeed that she had an opportunity of listening to personal reminiscences of places she so wished to behold. Books had been almost her only society, and the world which to her was most real was that ideal one in which her fancy dwelt luxuriously, and which all the dreariness of her daily experience could not prevent her enjoying. She "fared sumptuously every day" upon the unsubstantial delicacies of her dreams. Now she listened to this young gentleman who came out of the actual world with that interest which one would give to a messenger from a far country. And he was a fascinating talker, not only to her, but to her more experienced mother. There was no apparent haughtiness in his manner, and still a kind of princeliness distinguished him—that noble way of speaking, looking, and acting which wins the involuntary homage of all hearts. Once or twice the fire leaped out of his dark eyes, and a smile, vivid, swift, and sweet, played about his mouth, which made him, for the instant, superbly handsome. Several times, when giving utterance to a happy sentiment, he turned to the young girl, as if instinctively looking for the sympathy which beamed from her countenance.

In the midst of their conversation, loud voices arose in the adjoining bar-room. The stranger pursued his remarks as if not hearing them, for he noticed that his companions were uneasy. As the tumult increased, the face of the older lady grew paler and paler, while that of the daughter flushed with mortification; for the voice of the landlord could plainly be heard, among others, in drunken and noisy altercation. A violent quarrel, in which oaths, blows, and crushing benches became conspicuous, was going on, and reached such a height that Mrs. Turner, trembling and alarmed, arose and hurried to the door.

"Do not expose yourself, for Heaven's sake!"

exclaimed the gentleman, springing to detain her.

"But my husband!" she exclaimed, in a voice of anguish.

At that moment, there was a cry and a heavy fall. She flung open the door, and went in. Two or three men were making their escape from the room, and a couple of others were lifting the landlord from the floor. Their efforts and his wife's agony were of no avail; in falling, his temple had struck so heavily against the projecting corner of a bench that he was immediately killed.

If ever a delicately reared woman had suffered the degradations and mortifications attendant upon her position as the wife of one who swiftly passed down the road between a wine-bibbing gentleman and a shameless sot, that woman was Mrs. Turner. Her husband's complete failure in business, six years previous to this time, was his first excuse for giving unrestrained liberty to the flames of appetite which he had hitherto smothered. His downward career had been as swift as it was miserable, until he had finally taken refuge in the occupation of an inn-keeper, where he had little to do but sell to others and himself partake of the unhumanizing cup. His wife had endured the bitterness of this change with a dignity and fortitude most admirable; her health had failed under her sufferings, and still she had not deserted him, resolved to try all that patience could do, even after love and respect were extinct. It may be that she had sometimes looked forward to the time when dissipation should put an end to a life so much worse than worthless, with some kind of hope for her daughter's sake. If so, she had not contemplated the shock of this sudden and awful death, in the midst of violence and hate.

Let us not attempt to record the distress of that night.

Lewis Carolyn, although his business was pressing, and he had expected to go on his way the next morning, could not shake off the interest he felt in the afflicted and almost friendless widow and child. Although the house was crowded with the curious and some of the kind-hearted among the neighbors, there seemed no one upon whom they could rely for friendship or aid. However much *they* were to be pitied, the universal feeling was that there was no loss in the death of the wretched man. Mr. Carolyn staid until the funeral was over; he even—for he was wealthy as well as a Christian gentleman—paid the expenses of the funeral without mentioning the matter to the widow.

She did not learn the fact until after he had bidden them a kind and earnest farewell.

The parties concerned in the quarrel were arrested, but, as it turned out at the examination that the deceased had forced the quarrel upon the man who had knocked him down, that the deed was done in self-defence and without any intention of serious injury, and that the other persons had merely interfered to draw away the deceased, who was much intoxicated at the time, they were released.

CHAPTER II.

"At length it is finished."

So said Jessie Turner as she laid down her pen and pushed away from her the heap of manuscript. The weariness which had paled her cheek passed away, so, dropping her head upon her hand, she dreamed of the future reward of her labors. She looked out upon a winter sunset sky streaked with purple and gold. The little room in which she sat was cold, for it was unwarmed by the genial heat of any fire; but she did not now realize the privation. The shawl she had folded over her shoulders fell back; the curls which shadowed her flushed cheek were thrust away from her fair, intellectual forehead; her eyes rested on the western sky, whose glory was reflected in her countenance. For half an hour she sat absorbed in pleasing anticipations, and that unclouded sunset could not be brighter than her hopes.

"My novel will bring me fame—will bring me money," murmured the ambitious child of sixteen, and, breaking from her reverie, she smoothed her hair before the little mirror and hastened out into the adjoining room.

Here there was a cook-stove with a fire in it; a carpet upon the floor; two tables, one covered with books and sewing, the other with culinary utensils; likewise all those various articles of furniture necessary in a room comprising sitting, dining, and cooking apartment. In a rocking-chair near the fire sat Mrs. Turner, looking very much of an invalid. She was hearing a lesson in geography for a boy of five who stood by her side. Little Percy had been asleep in his bed upon that eventful night in which the tragedy of his father's death occurred, and had not been an actor in any of its scenes. Three months had elapsed since then. The family had very soon left the ghostly old inn, and, with the remnant of furniture which was still their own, had found refuge in

a little house not far away, and were eeking out a living as best they might.

"Dear mother," said Jessie, as she entered, "I forgot that you must need your tea; I will hasten to get it.

"There is but little to get, Jessie," was the half sad, half smiling reply.

"Enough for Percy and myself, mother, if it only were not for you. You cannot live as we can. But just bear up a little longer; my great novel is finished; that splendid work which is to bring us so many comforts by its sale! There is no doubt that we shall be rich soon, mother, and then you shall have—what do you want most? At least, you shall have dainty food to flatter that poor appetite of yours."

The young girl spoke laughingly, in a mock-heroic tone, as she swung a bucket on her arm and hastened out in the cold air after water with which to fill the tea-kettle. Soon she returned with purple, tingling fingers, but with glowing cheeks.

"Now, if I could only get you something nice," she said, as she filled the kettle and set out the table.

"There is neither butter nor sugar," said Mrs. Turner, "but at least there is plenty of flour."

"And no money?" asked Jessie.

"There are ten cents, to pay the postage on the letter which you expect from the post-office to-night. We will not begin to complain, my dear, while we have wood, water, and flour."

"It is not for myself I am troubled, mother; but you cannot endure privation."

"I have endured a great deal," was the quiet reply.

"Too much, too much," murmured the young girl, as she kissed her mother's pale cheek, with the tears in her eyes. The next moment, she was singing gayly about her work, Heaven never having gifted a poverty-stricken young thing with a lighter, happier, and more hopeful heart.

"Come, mamma, Percy, our luxurious repast is prepared." And the trio gathered about the little table. "It looks stylish, what there is of it," she continued, in the same merry voice. "How fortunate that we do not take sugar in our tea, now that there is none! We have plum-sauce, if we have no butter. 'The darkest cloud has a silvery lining,' which, you will observe, is very apropos." Here she helped her brother to another slice of bread, and continued: "Do you know, I think I am just the one of all persons to be poor? I am naturally so indolent that it requires pressing realities to awaken my energies. But you do not eat,

mamma; let me toast this bread for you." As she went to the pantry for a fork, she espied a small piece of butter, enough for the slice of bread, which bread was soon browned and laid upon the invalid's plate, who ate part of it, and gave the rest to Percy.

As if no thought or fancy of her innocent heart need be concealed, the daughter talked on, half seriously, half playfully, to the kind parent who sympathized with even her romantic dreams, encouraged her ambition, and stimulated her to rise above circumstances, however degrading and appalling, and who, in her own broken and blighted heart, still built up a world of anticipation, in which that gifted, beloved, and beautiful child found a befitting home.

As twilight deepened into night, Jessie lighted a lamp, and, after neatly putting away the tea things, brought forth the concluding chapters of her romance, and read them to her mother. Of course, the book was full of faults, with a superabundance of fancy, and a lack of naturalness in the characters; nevertheless, it was full of the first evidences of genius which might ripen to better fruit. It was natural that the cool discretion of the critic should be lost in the fond admiration of the mother, and Mrs. Turner could not but bestow praise upon this first effort. The desire to attract the attention of the world was not half so strong in the young author's bosom as the hope that, by the cultivation of her talents, she should some time be able to raise her dear mother above the necessity for labor.

"It is very fine," said little Percy, in a pompous tone, "it is very nice indeed. When it is printed, I can have a new jacket, can't I?" The sister stroked his golden curls with a smile. "I like it better than geography," he continued, emphatically.

There was a hero in the girl's romance who had a surprising resemblance in many respects to the young gentleman who had so singularly formed their acquaintance, during that time of trouble, at the inn. Mrs. Turner remarked it with a quiet smile, but said nothing of her discovery; she was content that he should remain at present the unconscious ideal of Jessie's artless heart, thinking that the first better acquaintance with men of equal cultivation whom she might sometimes meet would do away or modify the impression.

"I like it as well as 'the Assyrian come-down,'" repeated the boy, determined to applaud.

His fair sister laughed, as she arose and tied her hood, preparing to walk to the post-office,

which was not far away, and there was a full moon. "The eastern mail must be changed," she said, "and I am so anxious that I cannot wait until morning. Ah, precious dime!"—as she balanced it on her finger-tip—"how much worse than wasted will you be, if expended on a cruel refusal!"

She went out, and returned soon with a joyous face; she had three or four papers, and a letter postmarked New York. Throwing off her hood, she sat by the lamp, and broke the large red seal with trembling hands. As she read, the light died from her smile and the color from her cheeks. The anxious parent, who regarded her, had no need to ask if the news were bad. No one, save the enthusiastic and inexperienced child herself, could realize how deep was the disappointment with which she read:—

Jan. 14th, 18—.

DEAR MADAM: Your note has been received. The press is at present so crowded with works of fiction that we cannot make it profitable to negotiate for the novel you have been pleased to offer us.

We remain yours, with esteem,

Ah, well, foolish little girl, it had been an experiment of her own. Her mother, albeit she was nearly as ignorant of the details of publishing as herself, had cautioned her against too much expectancy; and yet she had hoped. She had not learned how necessary it was to have a name or friends among those who ruled the opinions of the literary world, or money to pay for her own ventures. A little western wildwood flower, "blushing unseen," in a remote and discredited region—how could it chance to obtrude itself upon the notice of its more cultivated brotherhood? She felt this first disappointment more keenly than some weightier ones which came afterwards, when the heart had been hardened by long custom to bearing them.

"Oh, mother, what are we to do now?" were her first words.

Mrs. Turner had picked up the brief letter, and read it. "To work, as we have worked, to wait, to hope, to trust in God," was the reply. "My dear child, I should love to see your gifts cultivated—I should be proud to feel that by your efforts you had raised yourself to the position you are fitted to fill; yet, though it would be wrong in you to let your talents lie idle, and though ambition well-directed is ennobling, you must neither be too

easily discouraged, nor allow your mind to become too firmly fixed upon worldly splendors."

"It is not fame, it is not splendor, mother," cried Jessie, in a low voice, "it is my love for you. You will kill yourself with work; day by day, I must see you ply your needle, when I feel that every stitch you take is one in your grave-clothes, and I have so blindly and foolishly clung to my task, and allowed you to earn the bread which I ate. 'Stitch, stitch, stitch!' Oh, mother, for women there is but this miserable resource, no matter what their abilities may be. Percy, too—he cannot be educated. Ah, I was not thinking of fame!"

Tears now began to stream down the face of the speaker. Her little brother stood by her side, and hugged her in his arms. "Don't cry, Jessie; don't cry, sis. I don't want a new jacket, and I'd far rather recite to you than go to school."

"But mamma, Percy—what can we do for her?"

"I shall soon be a man, and then I shall work for her. I shall earn a great deal of money, and buy a horse, and a house and pretty pictures in it, and mamma shall go out riding with me. And what will you have, sis?"

"I will have you to get my books printed," replied Jessie, brushing away the tears, and trying to smile cheerfully. So saying, she gathered up her manuscripts, and locked them away in a drawer.

Although that was a sad day on which Jessie finished her first book, and consigned it to the oblivion of a drawer, sadder and still sadder ones followed in its wake. The Four Corners was but a poor place for a family to get its living by sewing, so that cold and hunger prowled about the door. Then came the greatest terror of all. Jessie awoke, one night, and found her mother ill. Overwork and privation had brought about their legitimate results. Jessie put the last few sticks of wood in the stove when she kindled a fire to heat some stimulants for her sick mother. The gray morning found her shivering, both with apprehension and physical cold, beside the couch, where she had almost vainly toiled to relieve the sufferings so distressing to witness. After daylight, Mrs. Turner grew better, and was enabled to give some directions with regard to her own treatment. She did not wish a physician, for she thought she should rally soon and resist the attack, as she had done many times before.

"Why do you not go to the fire? You look cold," she asked of Jessie, who stood tenderly regarding her.

"There is no fire, mother. What shall we do? Percy will cry when he gets up and finds none, and you will suffer."

"Can you not sell that little table?" It was the first time the necessity for exposing their extreme poverty had been forced upon them, and the white face of the sick woman flushed as she mentioned it. The table spoken of was a beautiful but old-fashioned piece of furniture, which Jessie often referred to as their "sole relic of former grandeur." "Did not Miss Goodall admire it very much the last time she was in here, Jessie? We have heard that she is to be married soon, and perhaps she will take it. She said it was unique, and that she should hope to find one like it when she went east."

Miss Clara Goodall was the daughter of the sole merchant of the Four Corners. There is no neighborhood so small nor so far to the west but that it has its "aristocracy." Mr. Goodall was rich, and Miss Goodall was the shining star of the Four Corners aristocracy. She was a rather pretty-looking, not very refined girl of nineteen. She had been in the habit of petting Jessie Turner, because she knew Jessie thought her handsome, and it was gratifying to her good-natured vanity to perceive the kind of youthful admiration with which that unsophisticated child regarded her rosy mouth, long eyelashes, beautiful dresses, and white hands—an admiration so totally free from envy; then it was well known that Mrs. Turner was of an "older family" than any in that vicinity, and had once been wealthy; and there were two or three—among others, Dr. G—— and his wife—who treated her with the respect which her birth and education merited, despite her present poverty; so that Jessie was not entirely friendless in her destitution, only that it was bitter, this first crushing of pride, this first letting of the world into the secrets of home.

"I will ask her, mother," said Jessie, "as soon as it grows late enough for me to venture to call."

Percy now came for some assistance about his dressing; his little hands were blue with cold, but he repressed his fretfulness when told how ill his mother was. He went out into the road, and gathered up two or three pieces of board, and came in quite proud of his treasure; his sister replenished the fire with them, and gave him his breakfast of bread and milk. At nine o'clock, she ventured to start for Miss Goodall's. She found that one of her shoes was ripped, and her sense of neatness rebelled at appearing in the street with it; but duty urged, and, bidding her brother keep good

watch with mamma, she went out on her unpleasant errand.

With an agitated heart, she rang the bell at the door of the stately brick house. A servant ushered her into the parlor, where Miss Clara, in curl-papers and dressing-gown, was practising music, not anticipating so early a call.

"It is you, is it?" she said, as Jessie came in. "Did you come to practise or to listen this morning?"—for she often played for her friend, and, indeed, had troubled her indolent self to give her a few lessons on the piano.

"Neither, Miss Clara," replied her visitor, as she sat down, trying to draw her ripped shoe under her dress, so as to escape those sharp, but good-natured eyes. "I cannot stay long, for my mother is sick. I came to ask—if you did not—wish to buy that little table which you spoke of the other day."

Miss Goodall had been reading a work upon English homes, and had suddenly conceived a passion for ancient furniture and articles of *vertu*. She had looked with covetous eyes upon the work-table, of solid rosewood, and black with age, whose twisted legs and elaborately carved ornaments had excited her newly-awakened passion for the antique; so she answered, with sufficient readiness—

"Does your mother wish to dispose of it? I shall like very much to buy it. How much does she ask for it?"

"Mamma paid sixty dollars for it."

"But she does not expect as much as she gave for it?" asked the young lady, opening her eyes.

"O no, no, of course not," was the hasty reply. "Whatever you think would be right, and are willing to give."

The lady went to an ebony work-box, and took out her purse. "I have just twenty-five dollars, and papa will not allow me any more money this month," she said, counting the gold.

"It is enough, quite enough," answered Jessie, eagerly.

"Well, take it, then. But what possessed you to think of selling it?" she asked, suddenly, with a rude curiosity.

"Necessity," was the brief reply.

"Excuse me," said Miss Clara, as she saw the vivid red which shot into Jessie's face; "I am your friend, you know. Did you say your mother was sick? I shall be over to see her this afternoon. She is a sweet woman, your mother is."

"Thank you"—and Jessie smiled, for she loved to hear her mother praised—"we shall

be glad to see you; do not forget to come." And she moved towards the door.

Turning around with a waltzing step, Clara caught sight of her own pretty figure in a mirror, not displayed to its best advantage in a morning-dress. "Jessie," she laughed out, "don't you think I'm handsome?"

"To be sure I do," replied her companion, earnestly.

"Well, just come here, and I will show you somebody twice as beautiful. Come! take a peep at her."

Not guessing her meaning, the young girl came back, and Clara, snatching off her hood, forced her up before the glass.

"Now, you see, if my hair was out of these horrid curl-papers, and I had my prettiest dress and all my jewelry on, I should not be half so charming as you are in that faded dress. Mercy! how nicely you blush! To be sure, you are almost a child yet, but in a year or two you will have all the beaux."

"Why, Miss Goodall, how you talk!" murmured Jessie, trying to release herself, after casting one frightened look in the mirror, and seeing, not her own crimson face, but her calico dress and torn shoe.

"What I say is the melancholy truth. Do look, you little simpleton! You are twice as fair, and the color of your cheeks is so pretty, and your hair curls naturally, and as for your eyes, just compare them with my beadlike blue orbs. I can tell you one person who has fallen a victim to their brightness already, and that is—that is—guess!"—(in a whisper) "my brother James! You'd make a nice sister; we should never quarrel; and, I tell you, I don't believe you'll ever catch a better fellow than this same brother of mine. He blushes every time that I say 'Jessie.' There! he is coming through the dining-room now."

"What nonsense!" cried Jessie, almost crying with embarrassment; and, breaking from her tormentor, she fled from the house, just as James Goodall entered the parlor.

Seeing a load of wood at the corner, she bargained for it, then purchased some groceries at the store, and, meeting the old negro wood-sawyer, made him agree to come immediately and do the job she promised him.

With a lighter heart than when she left it, she returned home, found her mother somewhat better, and comforted Percy, who had grown a little peevish, with the promise of a good dinner. Her mother smiled so cheerfully when she told her how much money she had received, and she felt so relieved from the

dreadful despondency of actual want, that she scarcely sighed when Mr. Goodall's men came over and removed the table. In a village as small as that in which Mrs. Turner resided, it would be impossible for her to be entirely neglected in case of sickness. Several came in during the course of the day, bringing with them various drinks, jellies, and tempting dainties, as kind neighbors in small places very properly do.

It was not until she had crept into bed with her mother, who forbade her sitting up with her, the night of that day, that Jessie had leisure to remember the words of Clara Goodall about her brother James. Did they make that young heart beat any wilder and faster in its innocent nest? He was rich, he was tolerably good-looking, he had no bad habits, he was respected, he had a passable education. Was it not a splendid match for a poor sewing-girl? "She is mistaken," she whispered to herself; "he would never think of a child like me, and so poor, too; I am not so vain as to believe her. Yet, if he really should—no, never! Yet what a home I could give to my dear, old mother!" And Jessie Turner fell asleep, and dreamed a beautiful dream of a stranger whom she had once met, whom she remembered by the name of Lewis Carolyn.

CHAPTER III.

SPRING came, with its balmy breezes and faint odors of violets, its green valleys spangled with golden buttercups, its waters laughing at their release, its sunshine and its warmth. Mrs. Turner was ill again, and dangerously. "Spare me to my children!" was still the cry of her heart to Heaven—that bleeding, bruised, and careworn heart, which, having in itself suffered the multiplied trials of an unusually eventful and sorrowful life, would now guard, with an agony of love, those young beings alike from their own untried passions and the experience of an unfriendly world. The unselfish prayer was destined not to be granted. With the tenderest, the most constant care, Jessie watched and nursed, only to see her charge growing infinitely worse. The neighbors were very kind, but the daughter would resign her place to no one—love and anxiety gave her great powers of endurance. As the fiery fever withered those beloved lips, parching them with a thirst no liquid could cool, as the gentle brow contracted into furrows, and the bosom which had ever been so kind to her labored for breath,

struggling, struggling with the strange tenacity of the life-principle against dissolution, Jessie almost felt willing to yield to any fate which should ease such suffering.

At the close of a lovely day in May, the fever, the spasms, and all the pain of the torturing sickness went away, and Mrs. Turner lay composed, but very weak. She motioned for Jessie to lean over, and whispered—

"God is your friend; go to Him with all your cares; trust Him in every emergency. Be a good sister to Percy always; be father and mother to him; teach him the way."

Jessie tried to restrain the rushing tears, but they blinded her. When she wiped them away, and could once more distinguish those dear features, she saw that a smile was upon them; the lips were moving, and she inclined her ear to listen.

"Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Rest!" she repeated softly. "My child, kiss me, and go and try to sleep; I am so much better now." Jessie clung to her hand, and was loth to go. "It will please me; I do not need you now, and you have been such a darling nurse. Good-night!"

Mrs. Goodall and Dr. G——'s wife were in the room, and the exhausted girl, who had not slept for nearly a week, crept upon a lounge which stood opposite the bed. She could see, from where she lay, that her mother appeared to be sleeping. Now that the necessity for constant exertion was gone, her overtasked faculties resisted no longer, and she was soon in a deep slumber.

"Poor child!" whispered Mrs. Goodall, "how pale and thin she has grown! Just look at her, Mrs. G——; I believe she will be sick, too."

"I wish that I had such a daughter," replied the lady addressed, who had two sons, but no daughter, in her household. "So good, so devoted, so beautiful!"

There were other eyes than theirs regarding that pale and exquisite face. Mrs. Turner lay in such a position that her glance rested easily upon the sleeper; and oh, the unutterable love, prayer, and blessing in those dying eyes, as they moved not from her daughter's countenance! It might have been an hour that she remained thus motionless; the two watchers supposed her to be in an easy slumber, for the dark lashes were nearly closed upon the white cheeks; then they heard her murmur, quite distinctly, "Father, I give her to Thee!" and, with a slight upthrowing of her hands, she fell asleep—in death.

The two ladies looked at each other and at the unconscious girl. "Let us not awaken her; it will do no good now," said Mrs. G——.

Her suggestion was attended to, and Jessie slept all night, the deep slumber of exhaustion, while the soft tramping of careful feet and the tones of low conversation went on about her.

Just as the sun wheeled up from the horizon, Jessie sprang to her feet, fully awakened by his beams. The window was open; an apple-tree waved its dewy blossoms before her eyes, and a bird was singing on the very window-sill. At this moment, the attendants were all out of the room. Saying to herself, "My mother!" she turned towards the bed. Her step was arrested, for she saw the still outline of a form beneath a snowy sheet; she saw two hands crossed, patiently and helplessly, upon a rigid bosom, and a face with closed eyes and breathless lips.

When Mrs. G—— came in, a few moments later, she found the young girl lying upon the bed, with her face hidden in the bosom of the dead. She thought that perhaps she had fainted; but when she undertook to remove her, a cry so sorrowful, so heart-broken, burst from the mourner that she could only sit down and weep in sympathy. By and by, she gently loosened the arms of the living from their clasp upon the dead, and, drawing Jessie's head upon her own kind breast, she smoothed her hair, and talked to her, in a low voice, of resignation and that better world to which her beloved parent had gone.

Not one word did the stricken orphan hear of all that had been said, but remained tearless and silent where she was placed, until a neighbor came in, leading her little brother by the hand. She heard his sob of grief and affright, and felt the clinging of his arms about her neck, and answered him by an embrace and a burst of tears. She sank down upon the floor, and, taking him in her arms, the two children wept together for a long time. When the well-meaning Mrs. Goodall would have separated them, Mrs. G—— drew her away.

"She will make herself sick with crying."

"She will be more seriously ill, Mrs. Goodall, if she does *not* cry; it is much better so."

When they had grown more composed, the sister led the boy to look upon their mother.

"Will they put my mamma into the ugly ground, and make her stay alone there all night?" asked Percy, shuddering.

"They will put her body there, darling, but her spirit has gone to heaven, and become one

of those beautiful angels of which she loved to tell us—a beautiful, beautiful angel!"

The boy looked up through the window to the clear blue sky, with wondering and loving eyes. "I suppose she will look out of the sky, some day, and speak to me."

"I do not know whether you will ever see her face," replied the sister, "but you will hear her often, if you listen, speaking to your heart, and bidding you be a good child; and some time you will go to her, though not for a great many years, perhaps."

Here Jessie, who, in trying to comfort the little one, had comforted herself, again broke down with grief, and cast herself beside her mother; clinging to those cold hands whose tender pressure nevermore would thrill her aching heart, she would not be removed. Percy, after a time, was quieted and persuaded to eat his breakfast. As far as he comprehended the calamity which had befallen him, he was deeply affected. As soon as he could get away from those who were forcing upon his appetite those dainties which he did not desire, he stole back to the little bed-room, and, sitting in his chair beside the bed, clung to his sister's garments in a kind of amazed sorrow. Acquaintances began to come softly in—friends—that is, friendly people, for Jessie had no *friend* now.

The ceremonies and proprieties of life must be preserved. Clara Goodall and others busied themselves in preparing suitable apparel for the orphans. Jessie stood up, half fainting, and certainly unconscious of what she was standing there for, to be fitted with a black gown; then Clara replaced her in an arm-chair, brushed out and arranged her hair for her, and tried to persuade her to partake of food. It was Mrs. G—— who at last induced her to eat. "You *must* eat," she said; but how softly she spoke the imperative "*must*!" "You have taken nothing for a great many hours. You do not wish to make yourself ill, for your brother's sake; try to be brave for his sake, for you are all the one he has now to comfort him."

The poor child did look at him, and remembered her mother's charge. She drank a cup of tea with an effort, and then flew back, like a birdling frightened from its nest, to her place by the couch.

The long, dark, wretched day drew to a close. She could not have told whether it had been a day or a year. The shroud and the coffin were there; and there was a consultation as to what to do with the girl whose shining curls were

still streaming over the bosom of her lost mother, to induce her to repose.

"I never saw a person take a death harder," said a neighbor, in a pitying tone.

"She is stricken to the heart; there is no doubt about that," replied Mrs. G——, who had returned in the evening, to ascertain if there was not some kind office still to be performed. She had removed Percy, who had fallen asleep with the tears half dried on his chubby cheeks, to his cot; and she now proposed to give a composing draught to Jessie, which should enable her to sleep through the night. Again the softly imperative "must" was upon her lips, as she led the young girl to her chamber, and with her own hands unfastened her dress, and helped her upon the bed. "Now, Jessie," she said, "let us pray."

Kneeling by the couch, and clasping one of the orphan's hands in her own, she offered up a low prayer, the touching Christian fervor of which stole even upon the stunned mind of the mourner, and calmed the whirl of her thoughts. Before she ceased, her earthly listener was soothed almost into slumber; and when this lovely woman left her good-night kiss upon her forehead, she dreamed that it was her mother's, and smiled and slept.

Despite the slight opiate which she had taken, Jessie awoke about three o'clock. She lay some time without remembering what was the matter with her; it seemed as if the night, the black night, was pressing down upon her breast and keeping her heart from beating. Like the dash of a cold sea drenching a helpless shore, the memory of her loss broke over her. She groaned, and turned upon her couch. There was no rest there, and, after lying a short time, she arose, slipped on her dressing-gown, and stole to her mother's room. A single taper burned gloomily on a stand; the watchers were in an adjoining apartment, and the orphan heard them conversing pleasantly; one of them laughed a little, but checked herself, and sighed afterwards. They were young people; the loss was not theirs, and they could not be sad all night, even out of sympathy. "I am the one to watch with you, my mother," whispered Jessie, kneeling by the bed, and removing the wet cloth which covered the face. "O my mother, my mother!"

The watchers heard her moan, and started as if they had seen a ghost. Clara Goodall turned quite pale, and begged her brother to go in and see what it was. He slipped lightly inside the door, and saw the spirit-like form of the living kneeling by the dead, her bright

hair floating like wings upon her shoulders, her eyes fixed immovably upon the features before her. He gazed for several moments before he returned to tell them that it was Jessie; then he went in again, and knelt beside her, saying—

"Dear, dear Jessie, if I could comfort you!"

"There is no comfort," she said, abruptly; but, looking at him, and seeing the tears flowing down his cheeks, her chilled heart was touched with gratitude, and she said, more gently, "At least, not now. Leave me to my mourning now."

He arose and went out, and she kept watch until day.

The funeral was at ten o'clock. Jessie tried to repress her feelings, for she was afraid that she should lose her senses. She clasped Percy's hand tight, and led him out, where they were lifted into Mrs. G——'s carriage, who sat with them. Nearly all the neighborhood were in attendance, but she took no note of it. When she left the carriage and stood by the grave, her attempts to keep her mind firm and clear were in vain; overwhelmed with rushing darkness, she heard not the words of the minister or the chanting of the choir; she was conscious of nothing until the dreary sound of the earth rattling upon the coffin struck like a knife to her heart. She sank back into the arms of some one behind her, and thought herself dying; but the pang passed away, while, like one who hears sweet music in a dream, she heard clearly and distinctly the clergyman's voice—"I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, from henceforth, blessed are the dead who die in the Lord; even so saith the spirit, for they rest from their labors."

"They rest from their labors!" Hearing no more, her thoughts flew back, like lightning illuminating the past, and she understood, as with all her affection she had never done before, the peculiar excellencies and trials of that dear mother who, with a great and beautiful soul, had led a life unsatisfied upon earth, bearing her cross nobly, ever yearning for higher perfection. She thought of how heavy and vexing to bear had been her burdens, and suddenly she saw her, plainly as if she stood before her face, smiling upon her with eyes of love, having features of beauty and a glory upon her forehead, robed in garments of grace, beckoning towards the sky with spotless hands.

The people thought Jessie had fainted, but, as they bore her back to the carriage, she opened her eyes with a smile. "It is well with my mother," she said to Mrs. G——, and, leaning

back on the cushion, shed gentle and soothing tears.

Arrived at Mrs. G——'s—forthere the orphans were taken for the present—she yielded to the attentions of those around her with a kind of grateful resignation. The wild regret which she had felt at bidding farewell to that adored form, the fierce reluctance to consigning it to the grave, had passed away; in its stead was the memory of that consoling vision. She had a chance now to think of her own poverty and desolation. "What shall we do, Percy? We are orphans, and have no home!" The child could not answer his sister's question; his face was turned to hers, as he rested his head upon her knee; but, in his tearful eyes, burning with childish grief, she could read no worldly speculations, no solution of that difficult problem, "What are we to do?"

CHAPTER IV.

THE late Mrs. Turner had some relatives, of her husband's side of the family, residing in New York—a sister, married to a Dr. Stanton, and their children, a son and three daughters. Jessie had been acquainted with them all when a little girl; they had been often to visit at her home, but after her father's failure and consequent dissipation the intercourse had decreased until all acquaintanceship had ceased between the two families.

As, of late years, her mother had mentioned them only with proud pity of their selfishness, Jessie did not write to them, but had a paper containing a notice of the death forwarded to them a few days after the funeral. When this paper was received, a sense of her unsisterly conduct smote the worldly heart of Mrs. Stanton, and, in a moment of regret, she resolved to do something for the eldest of the orphans, whom she remembered as a delicate, ladylike child. She resolved to invite her to spend a year in her family, and to send her the means of coming. This was a great sacrifice for her, as she had three daughters of her own, and was extremely fashionable and only moderately wealthy, having nothing to spare from her allowance for others.

Dr. Stanton very warmly coincided with his wife in her resolutions. He was a man of generous feeling, very stately, very formal, but really very kind. The past neglect had hardly been his, for it had been at the suggestion of his wife that their summer excursions were always to some watering-place, and never west

to visit the Turners. Her excuse, that she would be too trying to her nerves to meet her brother in his fallen condition, was accepted by him as the *bona fide* reason of her reluctance. The other members of the family were variously affected at hearing the proposal to have their cousin visit them. Thomas, the Stanton junior, declared that he should like to promenade Fifth Avenue with his country cousin by his side, if she was anything like as pretty as she used to be, especially if she had "just *gaucherie* enough to plague Miriam to death;" however, as he should have to go back to college in September, he supposed he should hardly get to taking cousinly liberties before he would have to be off. Miss Stanton, who resembled her mother, and was selfish and elegant without being very handsome, thought with disdain of the proposition, and silently declared herself unwilling to forego any of her own privileges on the cousin's account. Julie, an excellent, warm-hearted girl of fifteen, was delighted with the idea of a friend not two years older than herself; while Minnie, who was but eight, thought anybody brother Tom wanted to see would be delightful. The letter was written and dispatched.

Mrs. G—— had insisted upon Jessie and her brother remaining with her a few weeks, so that when the letter reached its destination they were still at her house. Of course, it was at once shown to Mrs. G——, and her judgment solicited upon a decision. Jessie was very reluctant to accept the offer, because of the past conduct of her aunt. On the other hand, she knew not what to turn to where she was; and yet again, the letter contained no mention of Percy, and she could not desert him.

"I advise you to go, by all means," said her friend; "the change of scene and air, the interest of new associations will do more to restore your courage and failing health than anything else."

"But Percy?" questioned Jessie.

"It is partly for his sake that you must make up your mind to go. If you ruin your health by grief, he will have no one to look to; besides, you have confided to me your hopes of some time gaining or helping along a living by literary exertion; you can command friends and influences in a great city that will perhaps enable you to realize some of your plans. During the time that you remain in your aunt's house, you can be assiduously improving your time, cultivating your taste, and perhaps secure such friends and engagements as will make your wishes feasible. In that time, I

will take care of your brother here. He is not much trouble, and I am very fond of him. My boys are so much older that he will be quite a pet."

Jessie was so overcome by the generosity of this proposal that she could only express her thanks by smiles and tears. She tried to stammer forth suitable gratitude, but her words were hushed by the good lady.

"Do not say nay to it, child; I offer it because I am interested in both of you, and wish you to have a fair chance to begin life. Do you not think you had better go?"

"My aunt was not kind to my mother," sighed Jessie.

"Then you must freely forgive her, in the true Christian spirit, and accept this token of her remorse in a friendly manner. You cannot afford to cherish resentment against any who would be your friends, for you need friendship. If you love others, they will love you; and if anything will raise you up a host of well-wishers, it will be your own darling, affectionate heart. You have warm affections enough to compel half the world to love you."

"If I thought God approved of my acts, I should not feel deserted wherever I might go," said the young girl, timidly.

"Dear child, I think you will be one of His favored children. He chasteneth whom He loves, but only for their good. Those little hands may become brown with toil, but they will some time be pure and white in heaven. You have but to have faith, and all will be well."

The very afternoon upon which she had decided to go east, Clara and James Goodall called to ask Jessie to walk with them. There was a charming grove, with a bit of rock, and a small cascade and brook, which was much resorted to by the young people, and hither the three wended their way. It was about a quarter of a mile from the Four Corners. When they had reached the place and found a seat upon a moss-grown boulder which faced the noisy cascade, Clara, most innocently, was diverted away in search of wild violets, and her brother was left alone with Jessie.

Although she had never had "an offer," and was unskilled in every coquettish wile, her heart began to forebode what was coming, and she was fain to make an excuse to follow Clara, when, suddenly seizing her hand to detain her, James Goodall said:—

"I must speak to you a moment, dear Jessie. Believe me, hard as it is to repress my own selfish feelings, I would not intrude upon you

in these first days of your mourning, were it not that I know you have no home, and I want to offer you one. I want to make you happy. If you will be my wife, you shall want for nothing that I can procure for you; and your little brother shall share with us, and become as dear to me as he is to you."

Poor Jessie did not know how to reply; she was troubled, and just spoke the simple truth, without studying her answer. "You are very kind, Mr. Goodall; but how can I promise to be your wife when I do not love you? Oh, I am too young to think of love or marriage; but I am much obliged to you, indeed I am, for your kind intentions."

A more worldly young lady may smile at Jessie's refusal, may be able to dismiss a lover more gracefully; but she had not contemplated her part, not enacted in fancy hitherto.

"But will you not *learn* to love me, Jessie?"

His face was pale, and she knew by the depth of his voice that he was greatly moved. She sincerely wished that she could answer him "Yes;" but when she tried to feel it, and to school herself to it, she only felt the more the want of that spiritual element in his character which she knew that she needed to make her happy, yet could not define. A vision of a dark-eyed stranger, upon whose intellectual forehead sat the visible signet of the soul which her own responded to, rose up before her; and, though she had no thought of ever again meeting that person, or being mated with one who resembled him, yet the contrast made the young man by her side unsatisfactory. So, gathering up more firmness than she usually displayed, she answered him in a low voice—

"I am grateful, James, but I cannot promise to be your wife. It was very good of you to think of my needing a home, but I have received a letter to-day from my aunt in New York, who offers me a home in her family for a year, and, by Mrs. G——'s advice, I have concluded to accept it; I shall go very soon. I am only a child now in experience; a year from now, I shall know myself and the world better."

"Ah," sighed the young man, "I do indeed resign all hope of you now! If you are going to a city, to receive the attentions of the accomplished and brilliant, I may as well give up. Well, since you will not have me, I wish you much good fortune, and am glad you have such prospects."

"I shall never forget your goodness," responded the young girl, in a trembling tone, pained by the despondency of his accents. "I

do not expect to be loved or flattered where I am going; I hope only to put myself in the way of being useful. There comes Clara; let us meet her."

They walked along, trying to dispel from their faces the secret of their conversation. Clara was going to be very gay and to rally them, but something in her brother's face surprised and silenced her. On their way home, Jessie told her her plan of going to New York, and she said that she should have been very glad to hear it, if she had not rather have kept her till September, to be bridesmaid when she was married. "James is to be groomsman, and I'm sure I don't know whom he will find that he will consent to stand with in your place," she concluded, half laughingly.

Percy was the hardest one to convince of the expediency of the step about to be taken. Several times Jessie hesitated about leaving him, he seemed so forlorn at the thought; but one day he gave his consent, and never made any further objection. The secret of his yielding lay in a confidential talk which his friend James Goodall had with him, during which he was told that, if he did not wish his sister to die and be buried like his mother, he must let her go away where she would get quite well. He only stipulated that she should come back in time to help him make a snow-house in the winter.

Jessie's scanty wardrobe gave her some trouble. The sale of their little parcel of household furniture had provided her with a handsome black dress and shawl; the rest of the sum raised in that way had gone to make Percy comfortable for the season. Mrs. G—— had once been in mourning, and she had several articles that were yet good, which she contributed. A number of neat, plain collars and cuffs were made up at a trifling expense by Jessie's tasteful fingers, and she then found that there was an overplus of the means her aunt sent her sufficient to warrant her in purchasing a travelling-dress and bonnet. At last she was all ready for the—to her—eventful journey. Her farewell visit to her mother's grave cheered as much as sorrowed her, for she knelt beside it, and turned her pure face to heaven for the love and blessing of Heaven. She clung to her little brother, when the hour came for parting, and he cried lustily; but the carriage awaited her which was to convey her to the nearest railroad station, and she must not delay. While thus absorbed with Percy, she had left her purse and handkerchief upon the table. Clara and James had come over to bid

her good-by; the latter now handed her these, which she was nearly forgetting.

Mrs. G—— went with her the six miles to the station, where she placed her in the care of friends who were going in the same direction. She found these friends true to their appointment, and very willing to take charge of the young orphan so warmly recommended to their kindness. It was pleasant weather, early in June. The locomotive screamed, the train came rushing in, and, with a beating heart and brimming eyes, Jessie parted from Mrs. G——.

She was glad that the noise of the cars interrupted any conversation attempted by her new acquaintances, for she felt more like nestling in a corner and dreaming over the future than like talking. The last glimpse she had had of Percy was of his golden curls streaming over the window-sill at an upper casement, where he had gone to look after the carriage which bore away his sister.

It was not until she came to pay her hotel-bill at the City of L——, where they took a boat, that Jessie discovered four gold eagles in her purse which had not been there when she laid it down at her friend's. "It must have been James Goodall who did this thing. How good he is!" she murmured. She was sorry he had done it, but she could not help it; and he doubtless knew that a little pocket-money of her own would not come amiss when she found herself amid her city relatives.

(Conclusion next month.)

LILLIAN'S MASQUERADING.

BY MRS: FRANCES FULLER BARRITT.

CHAPTER I.

"The keenest pangs the wretched find
Are rapture to the dreary void,
The leafless desert of the mind,
The waste of feelings unemployed."

LILLIAN WHYTE, pacing listlessly back and forth in her luxurious dressing-room, seemed ill at ease. With eyes upturned, as if to avoid resting upon the elegant appointments profusely strewn about her, and nervously twisting and twining the fair hands together in every possible gesture of impatience, while murmuring, half sadly and half earnestly, some couplets from the "Psalm of Life," she had more the air of a prisoner in, than the independent mistress of, the stately brown-stone mansion whereof this spacious dressing-room was but the merest fraction, either for size or elegance. Garments of deep mourning assisted the impression of sorrowful restraint, and, but that her countenance indicated more the vehemence of unrest than the agitation of a real sorrow, her demeanor might have been mistaken for the consolateness of late bereavement. But the listless walk and the occasional stamp of the slippered foot, which one might see, but not hear, in that velvet-lined chamber, the contraction of the broad, fair, girlish brow, and the clasp and unclasp of the never-resting hands, gave another character to her disquiet, whatever it was.

"I wonder if what the poets say of life be true," she mused, stopping by the window to pluck a geranium-leaf.

As the light fell more upon her face and figure, it revealed a singular combination of

childlikeness and serious thought. It was the youthfulness and purity, however, that were infantile; the gravity of the eyes, the extraordinary breadth of forehead, from which the chestnut-brown hair was smoothly combed away, the rather pale complexion of the regular features, all gave that air commonly called "interesting" to a face which, had it been more rosy, might have been called beautiful, and dignity to a form too slight and delicate to be in the least stately or commanding of itself.

"Life is earnest, life is real, and the grave is *not* our goal," murmured Lillian, resuming her walk. "To me, life has been a dream, and I have never had one purpose in it of more than a moment's consideration. I am thoroughly weary of my life—no, perhaps I ought to say of myself, because, truly, I know little enough of life, except as a child in my mother's house, and subsequently as mistress of this great, solitary one, where no one ever came except Mr. Whyte. From what one learns in books, I ought to be quite a heroine to have been two years a wife, and a widow at eighteen, and the heiress of great wealth. A little beauty, too, I should have, to be a heroine; that, however, I shall have to imagine." Pausing before a large mirror, Lillian gave a half earnest, half mirthful survey of her person, as if to decide how much claim she had to the attribute of beauty. "Small, pale, neither ugly nor handsome, eyes of hazel, head rather too large for my body. It certainly was not for my comeliness that Mr. Whyte married me! How strange that I should be a widow! I look like an unformed school-

girl, and that is just what I am, only that, in the midst of my school-days, my mother gave me up, to be this incomplete woman that I appear, the wife of a strange old man, and now his widow and heiress. Alone in the world at eighteen! Inexperienced, I know not what to do with my fortune, though that, I suppose, is safely invested and taken care of by Mr. Whyte's attorney. The worst of all is that I know not what to do with *myself*. Six months of widowhood in this lonely house, with only the society of books, has been a dreary time, indeed. Oh, my mother, if, to have me the mistress of all this luxury, you yielded up my girlhood to the companionship of age, why did you not live to find enjoyment in it? For you, who denied yourself so much for me, I might have found pleasure in my bondage; but, dying, you left me to a life of cold and loveless duty; and, by another death, I am made free, yet in bonds, for is not this pulseless existence, requiring no thought or action of my own, the most intolerable slavery? I have no friendships, no loves, no duties. I am shut up, as in prison, from all that makes the lives of others pleasurable. I am not able to perform a common charity, so lifted out of the tide of humanity am I by my loneliness, my ignorance, and my wealth. From books I learn that there is sin, cruelty, suffering, and grief in all ranks of society, but none like mine. I must know what life is. How shall I find it out? Where shall I go to take lessons?"

Lillian's earnest discourse with herself was interrupted at this moment by a servant, who announced that the girl engaged to do sewing was waiting for orders in the back parlor.

"Send her to me," was the almost eager command, as the thought of having her solitude enlivened, even by the presence of a sewing-girl, sent a thrill through the morbidly sensitive nerves of the young widow; and, in the moments that intervened before the coming of this unknown seamstress, she busied herself with trying to imagine what sort of person she might be.

When the door opened, and the sewing-girl stood before her, Lillian arose with a feeling of involuntary respect, and a tinge of embarrassment imparted itself to her manner as she addressed some commonplace observations to her; for there was an air of superiority about the employee that made it seem something like presumption in the employer to introduce the business of the day in the usual careless manner. Not every lady living in a brown-stone mansion would have felt herself compelled to

notice this peculiarity of the seamstress, but Lillian Whyte was, as yet, but a novice in the ways of wealth and fashion, and obeyed a natural impulse naturally. Therefore, after giving her a little time to breathe from her evident fatigue, she very kindly inquired what kind of sewing she would rather have for that day.

"Oh, anything," answered the seamstress, appearing a little surprised.

"The truth is," said Lillian, "that I have not much need of any work; but, fancying that I would be better amused to have something going on in the house, I made some purchases both of linen and dress-goods, and you can commence at which you like best."

"Then I will do the linen first," answered the seamstress, still more surprised at so indulgent a patron.

"You may put as much work on them as you please," continued Lillian, pleasantly. "I shall not mind how long you are making them, so you do not idle away your time," she added, half playfully.

The seamstress glanced up from an examination of the goods, and, catching the mirthful expression of Lillian's smile, smiled brightly in return, without any shade of that wonder which had appeared in her countenance at first. A very comfortable feeling of confidence seemed established henceforth between the rich young widow and the poor young seamstress— young yet, though evidently the senior of Lillian.

"When you get ready to begin with your needle, I will read to you; but first tell me your name," said Lillian.

"My name is Eunice Harvey."

"Miss Harvey or Eunice?"

"Eunice," replied Miss Harvey, while a bright color came into her cheek at this so great condescension.

The little lady, who was watching her, with ready sympathy detected the cause of the heightened color, and added, softly, "And mine is Lillian."

"It is a sweet name," said Eunice, without raising her eyes from her work.

"Yes, Tennyson makes it sweet with his musical rhymes. You remember his

'Airy, fairy Lillian,
Flitting, fairy Lillian?'

But what shall I read to you?"

With far greater delicacy of perception than the daughters of fashion can boast, with all their fine nerves, the youthful, but unspoiled mistress of wealth which most of them might

envy had detected at once in her sewing-girl the evidences of cultivation and refinement, and, with true generosity and Christian kindness, acknowledged their existence as readily and graciously as if they had belonged to the greatest lady in the land. Therefore, she gave Eunice her choice of books or themes, and insisted on knowing what it was.

"Since you will, then, I should like to hear you read 'Rasselas,' because I think I need to be made more contented with my lot."

"Yes, that will be good for both of us," answered Lillian, as she went to fetch the book.

When luncheon was served, the seamstress was not excused from partaking with her patron, who, observing that she was becoming reserved and even melancholy, rallied her on the little benefit received from reading of Rasselas's experience.

"The good which I might have got from the book has been made ineffectual by the reader," replied Eunice, with a dim smile.

"How so?"

"Because, dear Lillian, your kindness and courtesy carry me back in recollection to a time when I was not a sewing-girl as now, but, like yourself, in the possession of ease and elegance, and when to be treated with the refined courtesy you have this day shown me was my right, and not a favor."

"Eunice," said Lillian, a little embarrassed by the red flushes of pride and sensibility on the cheek of the seamstress, "of course, I cannot affect to be ignorant of the distinctions of society, but, in my eyes, you have every right to courtesy you ever had, and to kindness, undoubtedly a far greater right, since now you need it to make up for other losses."

"The other losses would have been nothing, had not that of kindness gone along with them," answered Eunice, tremulously.

"You would smile at my ignorance, Eunice, could you know how little I really know of the world, with which, moreover, I have a great desire to become acquainted. Now, I will make a compact with you; I will read to you in the mornings while you sew for me, and in the afternoons you shall tell me all you know about this naughty bug-bear, the world. I want you to tell me what life is, for really I do not know, and have no possible means of finding out."

Eunice could not forbear a smile, in which there shone a little incredulity, as she answered: "If you have not any possible means, I know not indeed who has."

"Then I know how to use my means, perhaps."

"I will not pretend to doubt this, and yet it is an easy thing to learn."

"Teach me, then!"

"Indeed, I could teach you very little that would benefit you. The learning of the ways of society comes by use alone; and I would not have you go over my experience in order to get the knowledge I possess."

"But I would willingly undertake it."

"More willingly than you would go through it, I opine."

Lillian laughed a light-hearted, girlish laugh, as she answered: "You make a great deal of your superior acquirements; I shall think you are 'taking on airs' with me, if you persevere in refusing my petition."

"No, Mrs. Whyte," spoke Eunice, with much seriousness; "whatever disposition I might once have had for 'taking on airs,' this very knowledge which you covet has quite overcome. There is no better school of humility than that through which the daughter of fashion, suddenly deprived of wealth, must pass; and in that school I have taken my degree."

"Would it be trying yourself too much to relate to me your history?" asked Lillian, gently.

"It would be the best manner of giving you that glimpse of society you seem so much to desire; neither am I inclined to deny myself the pleasure of your sympathy, since I am sure it is genuine; but, if you are wearied before I am done, do not hesitate to interrupt me."

"Go on," urged Lillian, eagerly, her face glowing all over with anticipation.

We leave the new friends to their afternoon talk, and pass on to the results of that suddenly formed intimacy.

CHAPTER II.

THE genial spring sunshine poured into the spacious back parlor of a house on — Avenue, and glinted merrily over many a token of wealth and good taste in the forms of curious furniture and well chosen pictures, as well as in the bindings of costly books, scattered here and there to show mental cultivation and the habit of study. The present occupation of the inmates, however, with one exception, was anything but studious. Sitting upright in her chair of large capacity, was the mother and mistress of the family, her thick, sturdy figure seeming incapable of any other posture, and making one wonder whether she did not sleep perpendicularly. Around this centre-piece of the family group clustered the lighter personages in the

tableau—Miss Angela Knowe, in the horizontal upon a very comfortable sofa, teasing a petulant lap-dog—Mr. Arthur Knowe making, with his elegant figure, an acute angle of which the window-frame was the other side, and holding his fashionable hat as if he had just stepped in to pay his mother a call, only his attention seemed directed in quite a different quarter—another reclining figure being that of an invalid relative of the Knowes, King Granville by name—and last, and we fear we must also say least, the dark figure of a young girl clad in mourning, whose face, half averted, we still recognize as that of Lillian Whyte. She is bending over her embroidery, apparently quite intent on accomplishing a great deal on this particular morning.

"Miss White," drawled out Angela, after the fatigue of an argument with her mother about the propriety of allowing her old-fashioned father to accompany them to the Springs—"Miss White, bring your work to me that I may look at it."

"Permit me," interposed Arthur Knowe, taking the embroidery from Lillian's hands, at the same time glancing into her eyes a quick, expressive look. "My sister is so delicate," he continued, mischievously, "it gives me the highest gratification to be of service to her." And, bending over Angela's couch, he awaited with gravity her examination of the work.

"Your work is beautiful, Miss White," she said, at last; "but you are very slow with it."

"No wonder, I should say," put in Arthur, "for this is the third time this morning, to my knowledge, that you have interrupted Miss White to look at her work; this time, however, she has not her silks to rearrange"—returning the embroidery to Lillian with a bow.

"You are very attentive, Arthur," sneered Angela; "I shall soon hear that you have taken the arrangement of her silks upon yourself, also. I did not know that young gentlemen numbered embroidery among their accomplishments—or sewing-girls among their objects of attention," she added in a lower tone, but loud enough for Lillian to hear.

The painful blush which burned on Lillian's cheek was reflected in the angry one that crimsoned Arthur's face as he retorted: "My sister has many things to learn yet, and, among them, ladylike deportment."

"Arthur!" angrily cried his mother, turning her head sharply round, as if its connection with her stout and upright person was by a pivot, "where have you learned to address such compliments to your sister?"

"I beg your pardon, mother, and yours, Angela; but, hereafter, forbear meddling with my peculiarities if you would not surprise me into rudeness." Saying which, the young man stalked loftily from the room, and, not long after, Mrs. Knowe and her daughter were summoned to receive morning calls. Rising languidly, and shaking out the folds of her elegant *negligé*, Angela approached the lounge upon which reclined King Granville, apparently unobservant of all about him, and, as she secretly thought, provokingly indifferent, and, bending gracefully beside him, inquired very tenderly after his health, adding, "You know, Cousin King, I should not leave you in solitude, did not the duties of society require so much of my time. When you are a little better, I shall hope to have your assistance in entertaining all these tiresome people, shall I not?" she asked coquettishly, at the same time affecting to look for a fault in the exquisite satin slipper that encased her really pretty foot.

Her cousin smiled, glanced at the slipper and the pretty embroidery accidentally revealed by the elevation of the foot it contained to the edge of an ottoman, thanked her for her inquiries, and relapsed into his usual reserve.

And so it happened that Lillian Whyte and King Granville were left alone together. The hot and painful blush of wounded feeling had not subsided on Lillian's cheek when he directed his eyes upon her; feeling a little curiosity to know in what spirit the sewing-girl received Angela's interference in the gallantries bestowed upon her by Arthur. He had never before taken any notice of Lillian, though it often happened that he was lounging for hours in the back parlor. As he looked at her this morning, he was conscious of being interested in the delicate, childlike little person who so ceaselessly pursued her embroidery day after day in his presence, without ever raising her eyes from the work before her. He wondered if she enjoyed this stitching flowers into silk from morning till night without ever having time to look through the glass doors of the conservatory at the real living flowers growing there. He decided in his mind that she was quite pretty and intelligent-looking, and he was not surprised at Arthur's liking to take a little time to admire her in the mornings. She had a beautiful bloom for a sewing-girl—he had always thought they were pale. And he amused himself fancying how this quiet little girl, that looked as ladylike as possible, would appear, could she be presented to him as a full-blown belle of fashion, like his Cousin Angela. She looked

like a lady in her present position, he wondered if she would look like a sewing-girl in that ; the metamorphoses made by dress are so singular ! A book that had lain under the pillow of his lounge dropped upon the floor. It was but a slight sound, yet, so profound had been the silence, that Lillian started as if just awakened, and looked nervously in the direction of the lounge. Unconsciously, she sighed, and resumed her stitching with an air of weariness ; yet, seeing that the book remained unrecovered on the floor, and thinking perhaps the invalid could not reach it, she put down her work and went to give it to him.

"Thank you, Miss White ; I could have spared you this trouble, had I foreseen your intention ; but, since you have relinquished your embroidery for a moment, let me recommend you to take a turn in the conservatory, to rest your eyes and fingers. You will find my aunt has a choice collection of flowers that are well worth looking at."

"I cannot doubt it," answered Lillian, pleasantly, her face reflecting his kindly smile, "but these inodorous flowers that I am making demand my time to-day."

"Or, rather, my Cousin Angela demands it!" said Granville.

"It is all the same, she or her flowers," replied Lillian, "when our bread depends upon our labor or skill."

"And does your bread depend upon this interminable stitching? Pardon me, Miss White"—seeing that Lillian blushed and hesitated ; "I did not mean to be impertinent, but I was thinking of a dear friend of mine, who, for aught I know to the contrary, may be earning her bread in the same way, and she was not used to it. Poor Eunice !"

"Eunice!" repeated Lillian, her face suddenly taking on a joyous glow that really made her beautiful. "Was her name Eunice Harvey?"

"Do you know her? Can you tell me where she is?" cried Granville, starting up violently, and gazing wildly at Lillian. "I beg of you, Miss White, to tell me what you know of her!" he added, sinking back and growing deathly pale.

Lillian ran to him, fearing he had fainted, and perceived, to her horror, that a little thread of light red blood was oozing from his lips. Flying to the bell, she rang it clamorously, and, not knowing what else to do, commenced wiping his lips with her handkerchief. Thus summoned, it was not long before servants appeared, and after them Angela and her mother, the former shivering with terror, and the latter

giving orders in her sturdy, upright way. Angela's terror was not so great but that she perceived the tender solicitude of Lillian's looks and actions, and was made indignant thereby. "Get to your work, Miss White," said she ; "I will attend my cousin." And, having dismissed Lillian, was soon in her turn dismissed by the physician, who forbade such a press of attendance.

As soon as the hemorrhage was checked, Granville was removed to the quiet of his own apartment, and, the family dispersing, Lillian was left to ponder the events of the morning in solitude, the more grateful that she really needed to have time to reflect upon the discovery she had made, and the best manner of reuniting the broken links of this *affaire de cœur*, which interested her so warmly. Many a time, since she had undertaken this part of her "education," as she called it, had she shrunk, half dismayed, from the unpleasantness of her self-imposed lessons. Even to her, who had the secret refuge of a home and means for every want, and who could be inwardly amused at her outward humility, and by imagining the consternation of these man-mon-worshippers, could they know the truth—even to her, the experiences of the last month had been almost unbearable ; and she often found herself wondering how Eunice Harvey, who was of so lofty a nature, and had so much more to endure, had borne it all and lived. After the little passage of this morning, she had inwardly resolved to break off from her present studies, and return to the more pleasant, if more solitary one of books. But now ! Should she withdraw herself just at this juncture, when it seemed that she might be the means of restoring happiness, and perhaps luxury, to the heart and home of Eunice Harvey ?

While she was pondering, a step beside her chair startled her from her abstraction, and, glancing up, she beheld Arthur Knowe, his cheeks glowing and his eyes burning. His black curling hair was damp with moisture from his brow, and a strange expression of mingled mirth and moodiness curled into a smile of firm disdain his handsome mouth. Without apology, he drew a footstool beside her, and sat down where he could look in her face. Seeing upon the floor her handkerchief stained with blood, he snatched it up hastily, looked in the corners for the name, then cast it back again impatiently. "Lillian ! a proper name for the owner." Then, after a moment of silence, during which he was closely regard-

ing her, and during which, too, she had greatly lost her composure—"Lillian, I have just come from being lectured by my paragon of a sister; and who, do you guess, was the bone of contention between us?"

"Myself, I have no doubt," answered Lillian, with a sudden courage.

"You are quick of apprehension. Perhaps you can guess as readily what she said?"

"I shall not attempt that."

"Then I shall tell you."

"It is unnecessary; I should not like to hear."

Lillian's tone had a degree of hauteur that surprised herself; still, the needle would go amiss and prick her finger. She had recourse to the rejected cambric to stanch the tiny wound.

"Your blood and his," said Arthur, gloomily.

"Shall I tell you what my sister fears about this King Granville? She says you have bewitched him; and she says, moreover, that you have bewitched me."

"Why does your sister say I have bewitched Mr. Granville?" asked Lillian, appearing not to have heard the latter accusation.

"Because, since this attack, he has asked for you a number of times, and seems to desire your presence; and because, she says, you showed such solicitude for him when the hemorrhage came on."

He was looking intently in her face with his glowing eyes, and truly she had grown pale again.

"Let me go to him, then," she said, half rising. "I must see him, indeed, if he wishes it. Why should your sister detain me?"

"Sit down, Miss White; you cannot go to him now, for he is sleeping, and the doctor has ordered that he see no one for a day or two, except his nurse."

"Then, at the earliest time of safety, I must not be denied, indeed I must not; there is much depending on it," urged Lillian, seriously.

"What is this cousin of ours to you, Lillian White? A lover? He can bear no other relation to you that I can see! Are you, indeed, what my sister says—a flirt? She said more than that."

"You take great pains to have me understand your sister's opinion of me, Mr. Knowe. Have I not said I did not wish to hear it? Will you go away, and leave me to the only duty I have in this house—that of embellishing your idle sister's beauty? I am not paid, Mr. Knowe, for listening to accusations or insults. I will thank you to leave me to myself."

Arthur arose, as if to obey, but began pacing

back and forth through the room. The angry color had faded out from his cheeks, and an expression of doubt clouded his before animated countenance. Approaching Lillian once more, he bent over her chair, and whispered: "Make your own conditions, I care not how extravagant. I love you; you shall love me. That odious cousin must be left to Angela; she dotes on him, stupid as he is. But I am—bewitched, as Angela says; and I shall stop at nothing. Say, Lillian, when will you be *mine*?"

Lillian might have sat to a sculptor for a statue of amazement; but, as the full meaning of what had been said gradually dawned upon her comprehension, the woman-nature, outraged and indignant, sprang up to assert itself. Rising with dignity, she waved him back. "Do not expect an answer," she said, calmly. "Words are inadequate to express my scorn of you." And, passing him, rooted to the spot with mortification, she was proceeding to leave the apartment, when he sprang after her, and caught her hand to drag her back.

"Shall I call the servants?" asked Lillian, coldly.

"No, for God's sake, give me a moment! I am sorry—I am more humbled and distressed than you can believe at my accursed folly. I would not have said it, I would have told you how I loved you—for I do love you madly—but those women, with their notions of propriety, put every improper thing into our heads. I would have asked you to be my wife; I *do* ask you now, and my mother and Angela, and all their insipid friends may say just what they please, if you do not reject me. Will you not pardon me, Lillian? I was crazy; I was, to repeat Angela's word, bewitched."

Lillian had withdrawn her hand, and stood quietly watching his eager, questioning face, without a sign of emotion visible in her own. It was wonderful how stately she had grown in this one day.

"You will not pardon me, then? You are forever offended with me? Oh, do not say that, for, if I have but the slightest hope of gaining your love, you shall see how I repent of the offence."

"As far as I am concerned," was the grave reply, "I can easily pardon you, for you have had no power to injure me; *but for the principle I have no forgiveness, now or ever.* May all who assail youth, and helplessness, and need, in this heartless manner, receive the scorn and punishment they deserve!" And, gliding hurriedly from the room, Lillian sought to keep up her courage by hasty preparations to leave the

house; but, firm as she felt she was, the pent-up emotions of her bosom would burst forth, then and there, and, leaning on the banister, she gave way to passionate sobbing.

"If you see that I really repent, in dust and ashes, Lillian?" spoke a troubled voice at her side. "If you can know this?" But, with an impetuosity of which she was immediately afterwards ashamed, as betraying her agitation, she rushed into the street.

"How foolish I was," she said to herself, "to put myself in the way of such things, when there was no necessity! Yet why should I complain? It was to know life as it really is, in its deformity as well as its beauty, that I aspired; and I recoil at the first hard lessons. What if it had been some really poor and ill-paid girl, whose great want had weakened her spirit against the temptation of bartering body and soul for ease and the semblance of love? I ought to be thankful for my sex that it was I who suffered the indignity."

And, as Lillian walked rapidly along, in a sort of feverish excitement, she began to be conscious of a great void made in her heart. Some hope had died out of it. She was abashed, and crimson blushes dyed her face and burned upon her forehead, to remember that what was but corruption looked, until now, pleasant and fair in her inexperienced eyes. She never knew, until she had reason to despise him, that she had thought so well of Arthur Knowe; but she set herself resolutely not to feel grieved at her disappointment, and only acknowledged to herself that she was sorry it had happened, on account of Eunice Harvey and King Granville. It had interrupted her pleasant little plan of bringing them together, at least until something else could be thought of than the plan already formed.

That evening, however, as she sat solitary in her cozy library, the look of care and vexation fled away on the radiance of a dawning smile; and, promising herself to see another phase of worldliness, in a more agreeable manner, Lillian immediately commenced preparations by writing a pretty little note, and addressing it to "King Granville, Esq."

CHAPTER III.

"As letters some hand has invisibly traced,
When held to the flame, will steal out to the sight,
So many a feeling that long seemed effaced
The warmth of a meeting like this brings to light."

BUT Lillian had not calculated on the detective abilities of Miss Angela Knowe, in the

bottom of whose pocket the pretty little note reposed in darkness, doomed never to meet the eyes of him for whom it was intended. It was fortunate, considering this circumstance, that the billet contained only these few words, unintelligible to Angela: "I will undertake to find your friend for you in a few days, if you will endeavor to be patient," and signed "Lillian White." Angela had often puzzled her brain over those few words, and was compelled to acknowledge that there was no great appearance of danger decipherable in them, except the objectionable name at the bottom.

In the mean time, Lillian had gone twice to the house on — Avenue, at such hours of the day as Arthur was likely to be absent, with the intention of asking to speak with Granville. In the first instance, she was refused an interview by the attendant, the family being out; and in the second had had her money thrust in her face, and been denied admission altogether. Flushed with indignation, she was turning to descend the steps, and threw the silver pieces to a beggar, when Arthur Knowe confronted her, looking so startled and so joyous at the meeting, that, in spite of her determination to the contrary, she could not forbear a slight glance of recognition, which, however, she speedily concealed under her veil, with a feeling of shame.

"Miss White," said Arthur, walking by her side, "do you throw away money which you need because you will not take it from the hands of this hated family? Have I been so unfortunate as to stand in your way pecuniarily? If you would allow me to make some restitution—"

"No restitution is needed, sir."

"Then we will not talk of that. I rejoice that I have met you to-day, for more reasons than because I am glad to see you again—which is better fortune than I deserve—but on account of Granville, whose recovery is really retarded by his anxiety about you, which is not of the nature I once foolishly feared it was, but, apparently, because you could tell him something which he very much wishes to know. I am aware that, after what I just witnessed at my mother's door, you might say—were you not dear Lillian White—I had no right to expect you would do anything to oblige one of our family; but this matter takes on a serious face when we see that Granville is a sufferer by the disagreeable position of affairs, more than any one else. Angela, too, who has set her heart on Granville, is very anxious for his recovery, though by her foolish jealousy she de-

feats herself. Now, Miss White, what I ask of you is that you will intrust me with this business, whatever it may be, and empower me to set my cousin's heart at rest."

"Even if it be the destruction of Angela's hopes?"

"What! You cannot mean that it is true, what Angela suspects of the state of Granville's heart?"

"No," answered Lillian, coldly, "it is not true that Mr. Granville is the least interested in me personally; nevertheless, what I had to tell him would put an end to any hopes your sister may entertain with regard to him. Being fully assured of this, would you become the bearer of my message?"

"That is a trying question, Miss White. If I was sure it was interest in King, and not in his fortune, that Angela feels, the test would be severe to decide in this case. I should like to know that I did not injure Angela's prospects of happiness by interfering in this matter."

"That is something I have not taken into consideration, nor shall I, in the communication I have to make to Mr. Granville. You have solicited this office of kindness; if now you shrink from undertaking it, there are other means, I trust, that will not fail."

"You are resolved, then, to thwart Angela's expectations, if you can? Are you kind, Miss White?"

"Will your sister marry Mr. Granville, whether he will or no?"

"I see you think she is capable of it. Perhaps she is. Give me this message, and I promise to deliver it, trusting to your evident conviction of the final result that I am doing right."

Again was Lillian betrayed into a half smile, as she thanked him for the promise, which again she immediately regretted, as, answering it with one far brighter, he said:—

"I have won one smile from the eyes dearest in the world, though ever so faint and lukewarm. Could I do something to deserve another more cordial and inspiring, I should be happy, indeed."

"Nay, if you regard this service as done to me, I recall my commission. There can be no exchange of obligation or reward between us, even the reward of an involuntary smile. Please to understand me, Arthur Knowe. I do not consider all means of communication between Mr. Granville and myself cut off, because your family refuse to admit me. You asked for the commission, and I did not refuse it."

"I see! I see! I am to do this little service

for my cousin, and not for you. Well, be it so. I am sworn, Lillian White, that one day you shall respect me, with or against your will."

"You forget that we are not likely to meet again; and here we are at the corner where I must take the omnibus."

"Do not ride; let me walk home with you. You have not given me the message yet."

"By no means; I prefer going home in an omnibus. Yet stay a moment. Were you to know that the person in whom your cousin is interested is only a sewing-girl, like myself, would you still deliver the message?"

"Were she like yourself, and not yourself, I should feel that I was conferring an infinite favor upon him by taking him any message from her not unkind."

For the third time Lillian smiled against her will, and saw the light reflected an hundredfold more brightly from the eyes that watched her constantly. "It is enough," she said, quickly; "tell Granville that, when he has been two weeks at any place on the seashore, for the benefit of his health, the person in whom he is interested will find means to meet him there. The place of his destination and the time of his departure can be inclosed in a note addressed to me through the post-office."

At this instant an omnibus drew up, and, stepping in, with only a slight bow to Arthur, Lillian was carried a square or two farther down town before she commenced retracing her steps towards home, so careful had she been to leave no trace of her real course to Arthur's knowledge.

And thus it happened that the detective was eluded; and Lillian was in possession of a letter stating that, on the last of May, King Granville would leave New York for Newport. And it also happened, in pursuance of her design, that the name of Mrs. Whyte, followed by "and servant," and under it the name of Miss Harvey, appeared on the hotel register, about the middle of June. There was some speculation, as there always is, concerning the new arrival, and the gentlemen, after they had each and singly looked at the names on the register, prepared themselves to be on the lookout for the new "Miss." As for King Granville, he glanced at the names and turned away disappointed, though it was true he had started at seeing "Miss Harvey." But who could this Mrs. Whyte be? Eunice had no relatives of that name. Yet might it not be possible that she had been compelled to become humble companion to some woman of fashion? But

he did not think this Miss Harvey was Eunice. So strong had been his hope of meeting her that, with an instinctive feeling of inability to bear a disappointment, he would not let himself believe she was near him until he saw her, and, in a fever between doubt and belief, retired to his room to await dinner. When that meal was announced, he found himself unable to go down stairs, so great was the excitement of his nerves, and in immediate danger of another attack upon his lungs.

But there was one other who had also consulted the register, and only to be puzzled. Arthur Knowe had accompanied his cousin to Newport, ostensibly out of concern for his welfare. Nor would we be so unfair as to doubt his professions; at the same time, we would take the liberty of suggesting that a sort of instinct, or presentiment, or second sight had imparted to him the conviction that at Newport he should learn something further of Lillian White. Of the name of the person his cousin expected to meet he knew nothing; therefore he had no reason to suppose that the expected arrival had yet taken place, and when he seated himself at table was so absorbed with thinking of Granville's disappointment—to say nothing of his own—that he neglected to look for the strangers.

"Have you seen her, Knowe?" asked a young man at his elbow.

"Seen whom, Thorne?" responded Arthur, starting as if he thought his secret had been read.

"Mrs. Whyte. She is splendid! by Jove, the handsomest woman that's been here this five years. It's no use trying to see her from here; but just keep on the lookout when she rises from table. Venus rising from the sea will be nothing to it, I'll warrant you. And there's a very pretty girl with her, dressed in black, a young, shy thing; but she isn't a taper to this new star. I believe she, that is the star, is a widow. At any rate, nobody can find out who her husband is, if she has got one, and there is no doubt she's rich."

"You've been industrious, Fred, to pick up all this intelligence in so short a time. Whom will you get to introduce you?"

"Oh, I shall circulate around amongst the ladies, and find somebody that knows something about them, and get acquainted before to-morrow night. I'll introduce you then, if you would like, though remember the widow is my game."

"I shall recollect nothing of the kind, unless I take a fancy to the 'young, shy thing' you

say can't 'hold a candle to her,' which I do not promise to do."

The guests commenced leaving the table. The young men sat still on purpose to watch the ladies go by, and Thorne, fixing his eyes on the supposed widow, whispered: "There she is, Knowe; do you see her?"

Yes, Arthur saw her, and magnificent did Eunice Harvey look, as, dressed in the height of fashion and good taste, she glided through the throng. But it was not on her his gaze was riveted; there was the youthful and graceful figure of Lillian White, dressed as he had never before seen her, her exquisitely fair and rounded arm and lovely neck set off so well by her dress of black silk tissue and her luxuriant brown hair, half in braids and half in curls, adorning her head more than diamonds, close beside the "star." And she had caught his glance and blushed. Up he sprang, and was at the door before them.

"Miss White," he said, bowing to her companion, "permit me to speak to you of my cousin." Ah, that cousin! Was not he glad he had a sick cousin? "Granville, my dear Miss White, is quite ill again to-day, and I hardly know whether it is from hope deferred or joy anticipated. Is his friend here?" he whispered, bending so her ear alone should catch the question.

"Hush!" said Lillian. "*This is his friend; she does not know about it yet.*"

"You will have to introduce me," he said, in the same tone.

"I acknowledge the necessity—Mr. Arthur Knowe, Miss Harvey." And while the usual exchange of compliments was taking place, Lillian was trying to see her way clear in this unexpected dilemma. Here was something she had not counted upon, the meeting of Arthur Knowe here, and the necessity of making him of use. However, she must put the best face upon her difficulties, and, whispering him to prepare his cousin, promised him aloud to meet him again in half an hour on the piazza.

That half hour was one of intense feeling to the two persons most interested, and Lillian regretted that she had so long put off the "pleasant surprise" she intended to give her friend, since now it was more likely to be painful than pleasant.

Reclining in a fauteuil, in the most shaded corner of the piazza, was the invalid at the time appointed, and Arthur Knowe keeping watch over him, laughing, and jesting, and quoting rhymes, and doing whatever he could to keep off the symptoms of a nervous attack, which

he constantly dreaded. Not that his own mind was so much at ease; indeed, it was not altogether untroubled by stormy winds of doubt, arising not only out of the position he was in with Lillian, but from a strange confusion in his head about names, and not knowing who Mrs. Whyte was, and several other crude ideas, in no wise so easily digested as his dinner. Nevertheless, he kept up a great appearance of good spirits until a "silken murmur" gave warning of some one approaching, and then, ejaculating "King, be a man!" advanced to meet Lillian and Miss Harvey. Both were pale, the one with emotion and the other with sympathy; and it was with an effort he could command himself to present them to his cousin, who, seeing their approach, had risen to his feet and stood with pale lips and glittering eyes, waiting to clasp the hand of her who had been so loved and so lamented.

"My Eunice!"

"My King!"

The spoken words were hoarse and indistinct, but there was no misunderstanding the language of eyes, and every feature breathing love, pain, gladness, and regret. Lillian turned her face away to hide its tremulousness and tears; but, turn whichever way she would, the eyes of Arthur found her out and studied her intently.

Seeing that his cousin was too much agitated to talk, Arthur at length suggested to Lillian that they should walk away for a few minutes, and leave the lovers to themselves, the propriety of which suggestion Lillian acknowledged by taking his proffered arm.

"You have pity for others' miseries, but none for mine, Miss White," he said, after a moment's silence. "Have you no fear that I shall become like my cousin there? It runs in our family to die of love."

Lillian gave him a look full of mirth, for the idea of his dying of love amused her exceedingly, but, meeting his magnetic look, was compelled to observe him seriously, and could not help perceiving that he had really grown much thinner and paler since their last meeting. A strange embarrassment fell upon her, and the fact that he still addressed her as "Miss White" occurred to her unpleasantly. She signified her desire to return to their friends, wishing to avoid further conversation.

"You will not have pity, then?" he said, sadly, holding her back as much as he could by a slow movement.

Still Lillian did not answer or look at him

again; and, in a moment more, they were beside Granville's chair.

"Eunice has told me," said he, "and no words can convey an expression of my gratitude, Mrs. Whyte, for your double kindness."

"Mrs. Whyte!" interrupted Arthur. "Will you tell me, Miss Harvey, whether this lady is Miss White or Mrs. W-h-y-t-e?"

"Certainly, sir. She is Mrs. Whyte, relict of the late Manly Whyte, Esq., resident at No. — Avenue —, a lady of a large fortune, but immensely larger heart and more costly virtues."

The silence that fell after this explanation was broken, at last, by Arthur, over whose face a rapid flush had passed, and left it strikingly pale and composed. "She has every virtue but one—that of forgiveness," said he, in a voice of deep regret. "I loved her, and I offended her. She forgets the love; she does not forget the offence. The sight of Granville's happiness and the constant sense of my misfortune are too much for me, and I leave my cousin henceforth to you, Miss Harvey, knowing his recovery will be rapid and sure, and that he can henceforth dispense with me."

"Do not let him go," whispered Eunice to Lillian, whose face grew red and then white, and red and white again, every instant.

"No, do not let him go," pleaded Granville. "Arthur has told me all, and there were extenuating circumstances. Moreover, he declares himself heartily tired of the idleness and folly of fashionable life, which is at the bottom of its vices. He is about to commence the study of a profession and turn worker in the world. Do not let him go, for we cannot spare him yet."

"No, do not let me go, dearest Lillian, but hold me fast forever!" entreated Arthur, extending his hand doubtfully.

Miss Harvey, who was holding one of Lillian's hands, placed it in Arthur's open palm, which speedily closed over it with a loving pressure.

That evening, when the promenaders filled the piazza, a young man kept much in the vicinity of our friends, and cast some envious glances at Knowe and Granville.

"Poor Thorne!" laughed Arthur, "he thinks I am a lucky dog, and is mentally consigning me to the bottom of the Red Sea for not introducing him."

Angela was in great consternation, on her arrival next day, at the position of affairs, but finally concluded to overlook her own loss on account of her brother's gain. She declared she had always thought Lillian was a lady,

and loved her like a sister, and had been inconsolable at her unaccountable absence. As for Mrs. Knowe, she grew more unbending than

ever after her son's engagement ; and poor Mr. Knowe, Senior, said—what he always did about family affairs—nothing.

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For the New York Observer..

LITTLE ALICE.

A pastor in Western Pennsylvania writes to Mr. Brewster :

A little girl of my congregation, named ALICE DEITRICK, eleven years old, having read in the New York Observer (I believe) that you have generously offered to present a copy of the Holy Bible to every child that would recite the Catechism perfectly, without missing a word, was encouraged to attempt it; and has succeeded in a way that would be highly gratifying to the truth-loving and generous heart that could make such an offer. She recited the "Shorter Catechism" to me from beginning to end *without missing a single word*—not even the *particle* words, which are so likely to be substituted one for another. She recited it, both giving the question and answer herself from memory, and in answer to the questions proposed by me; and to her Sunday school teacher, my daughter, recited the answers merely without the questions. She accomplished the task some months ago—but has been ill of hip disease, and I did not hear her recite till last week. She does it too with a propriety of accent, emphasis and intonation, that proves that she understands it. She is a very lovely and excellent little girl—an orphan; and, I hope, may get a Bible all the way from New York.

A GOOD ANSWER,—A young lady in a Sabbath school a few mornings since asked her class, "How soon a child should give its heart to God?" One little girl said: "When thirteen years old;" another "Ten;" another "Six." At length the last child in the class spoke:—"Just as soon as we know who God is."

LITTLE ELLEN'S OBEDIENCE.

A TRUE STORY.

We know a little boy, five years old, who can always be trusted, when he promises to obey his parents. We heard him, a few days ago, when some playmates were begging him to go with them into the next yard, say very sturdily, "My father told me to stay here, and I promised him I would," and he did stay, though deserted by all the others. A little girl once escaped death, by minding her mother. Here is the story.

Little Ellen had a pretty white dog, named Fido, that she loved very much. She would play with him for hours, and was very careful that nothing should harm him. One day her mother wished to visit a neighbor, and fearing that Ellen, who was a very little girl, might go too near the stove, or meet with some other accident, if left alone in the house, told her to take Fido and play in the front yard until she returned. She had been gone but a short time, when a large dog came by the gate and turned into the house, through the kitchen door, which stood open. Fido ran in too, that he might have a frolic, but the large dog bit him and chased him about the kitchen, while poor Fido tried to get away, and yelped to his little mistress to come to his help.

Little Ellen looked on in great distress, wishing to save her playfellow, but did not venture into the house. Soon some children going home from school passed by and told Ellen that if she would go with them they would help her to get Fido away from the great dog. But Ellen said,

"No, mother told me to stay out here, and I cannot go in."

The children urged, that when her dog was in such danger, her mother would not care if she did go in "just a moment, and come right out again."

No; Ellen stood firm:

"Mother said *stay here*, and I cannot disobey her."

While they were talking about it, some men came hastily into the yard, and asked if they had seen a great dog go by. Hearing that he was in the house, they went in and killed him, for the *dog was mad*, and had bitten many cattle before he reached Ellen's home. It was found that he had killed poor Fido. He would have bitten Ellen also, if she had not obeyed her mother's wish as well as her command, and she would have died of a dreadful disease soon after.

Dear children, do you always obey your mother implicitly?

LOTTIE MERRILL; OR, THE GIRL WITH NO FEELINGS.

BY LUCY N. GODFREY.

I was just sixteen. The severe illness of my mother prevented my entering Madame Boalt's school at the commencement of the fall term, as had been purposed, and my place as room-mate for Hattie Warner was yielded to Cousin Fannie. I regretted this exceedingly, when, but a brief time after, mother's rapid convalescence led her to decide that I should follow my class-mates. My bright anticipations of a *merry* time at boarding-school were decidedly dampened by the fact that I must be the odd one of our class of seven, and take a room with a stranger; nor was I cheered by the descriptions of my future companion, with which my correspondents at the seminary favored me. Madame Boalt, who had been an early friend of my mother's, wrote only praise of Lottie Merrill, as she congratulated us that I should find her quiet, studious habits, of exceeding advantage in enabling me to improve my time; but I always had a dislike for such paragons of perfection as shame my inferiority, so her earnest praise gave me no pleasure, while the notes of the girls really prejudiced me against their subject.

"I call her Miss Propriety, though I almost wonder how I dare," wrote the mischief-loving Hattie.

"She is a good girl, but then so stiff and notional you never will suit her, any more than she will please you," Cousin Fannie wrote.

"She always does everything precisely as it should be done, at just the right time, and keeps her room, which she has always preferred to have alone, when possible, in the very nicest order; so let me caution you to be careful how you indulge any habit of carelessness," wrote Nellie Conway; while Katie Roe added, as her testimony, "Lottie Merrill is so proud that she never allows herself to enjoy anything like the rest of us, lest she should compromise her dignity."

"The girls say she has never had an intimate friend since she came to the seminary, two years ago. Nor has she ever had a word of difficulty with any one; so you may judge how independent she is," was the judgment of another of these self-appointed critics; while still another gave, as the opinion of those better acquainted with Lottie than herself—"She is exceedingly cold-hearted, and is never roused to any kind of feeling."

When I met Lottie I was surprised to find her more than a year younger than myself, with a bit of awkwardness still hanging about her, from her rapid growth. She evidently was not like the ideal I had dreaded, as I had imagined the various means by which she would make me feel myself an intruder in her room. With most thoughtful courtesy she arranged everything for my convenience, insisting upon my placing my books by the pleasanter window, and yielding to me much the larger portion of the little closet, because I was unaccustomed to being away from home. I did not find her sportive and merry, but she roused my ambition to fully overtake my classmates, who were several weeks in advance of me, kindly assisting me in my studies—a task for which she was quite competent. I was already beginning to love Lottie, when a little incident occurred which made us friends.

A group of girls were conversing gayly in the common sitting-room, when Nellie Otis brought forward a head-dress for our admiration. It was a gaudy piece of millinery, altogether unsuited to her little face and figure, but it had elicited some compliments, when Lottie remarked—

"I think it would be prettier for you, little Nellie, if you should take off that largest bow."

"Who asked for your opinion, Miss Sheared Top? You had better wait till your own head is dressed a trifle better before you criticize other people's things," was the pert reply; and Lottie walked quietly from the room.

"You were too bad, Nellie!" exclaimed half a dozen voices.

"O, pshaw!" said Nellie, "she doesn't care—I never would have said it to any one else, but she never cares. Her mind is on higher thoughts intent."

I knew that Lottie was a trifle sensitive concerning the loss of a fine head of hair, and I felt keenly the insult to one who had been so uniformly kind to me; so I followed her to our room, hoping my sympathy might give her some comfort. I found the bolt slipped,

but in her haste Lottie had not fairly shut the door, so it merely showed me that she wished to be alone, without hindering my entrance. I hesitated before intruding upon her privacy, but the convulsive sobs which I heard decided me. I was really frightened by Lottie's appearance. She did not hear me, indeed, I doubt if she could have heard anything then. She was kneeling by the bedside, both hands clenched in the clothes, as I first saw her, but she gradually sank lower and lower, as though crushed by an overpowering weight, while sobs shook her frame, and occasional interjections, such as—"O, Father, help me! I was angry, forgive me! Help me to bear patiently all that I ought! Make me better! O, make me lovable!"—but made her grief more manifest. As her face sank upon the carpet, her lips moving in half-audible prayer, I stepped forward, and seating myself by her, lifted her head to my lap, as I said—

"Dear, dear Lottie, this must not be. You will make yourself sick!"

"And who will care if I am sick, or if I die?" said she bitterly.

"O, Lottie, don't talk so, you know we would all love you if you would only let us."

"O, yes, there it is," and the sobs came quicker; "it is my fault—nobody can love me, for I am not lovable. I—plain looking, dressed without taste, awkward, always making mal-à-propos speeches—no, nobody can ever love me."

But I will not weary you, my reader, with a further record of our conversation. Before its close I understood Lottie Merrill's character better than any other had ever sought to do, while she believed that I was really her friend. Poor Lottie! how sadly had she been misjudged, from her earliest childhood. Motherless, from her infancy, the aunt to whose care she had been confided had no sympathy with her sensitive nature. Again and again her manifestations of emotion were ridiculed, till she learned to conceal all her deepest feelings. This very concealment made them stronger still, and many a carelessly uttered word had rankled in her memory, inflicting a torture from which its author would have shrunk. Thus had she come to view herself as in reality more plain looking than she was; while her rich, but illy-fitting dresses, and the awkwardness, of which she was conscious, were a constant source of dissatisfaction to her. She was too proud to wish for pity, therefore she assumed a careless, independent manner. Full of social, kindly impulses, she checked them

all with thoughts of her inability to join the other girls, as an equal, in their amusements, and, devoting all her energies to study, she had risen to the very front rank of scholarship in the school. This pre-eminence she did not value, though she loved study for its own sake, and was usually happy in constant occupation.

"I never cry," she told me, "as the other girls do, gently and soothingly—I wait, bearing and concealing everything till I can bear no longer; and then I have a regular storm—a cry like a thunder-shower, enough to kill you, Ninna, but just such as I need to clear out the ugly vapors, which will collect in my heart; so you will understand I did not make such a great fuss, because Nellie was thoughtless. It has been many weeks since I have had a storm before, and I shall feel the better for it; besides," she added, solemnly, "I never so fully realize that God is our Father, as when I am becoming happy again, after such sad times."

From this time I have numbered Lottie Merrill among my dearest friends, and, as I look back upon those years of school-girl intimacy, with thoughtful, philosophic glance, I realize the blessed influence which each of us exerted upon the undeveloped character of the other. Lottie, though younger in years than myself, was older in experience, and her earnest endeavors to do right, at whatever sacrifice of present pleasure, were of untold advantage to one of my volatile temperament. So far as mental discipline and culture were concerned, she contributed more to my advancement than my teachers. Much, however, as I gained from her, our friendship—not myself, particularly, for any affection which would have given her self-confidence would have done the same work for her—exerted a still more marked influence upon her character. The morbid feelings she had cherished were dissipated, by merely bringing them to the light. I showed her some of the notes I had received concerning her, as the candid opinions of her school-mates, and, though they were none too flattering, they proved a salutary lesson, since they showed her that it was her own fault that she had been alone among these companions.

There was no sudden change in Lottie. She was too much engrossed in her studies to join in many of the frolics of the girls, but, when she did allow herself a holiday, she entered into our sports with a heartiness and good will which soon made us wish she would join us oftener.

I recollect one time, during the Indian Summer of that year, when I was heartily provoked with her for what seemed obstinacy in self-denial. A nutting party was proposed, and Lottie was unusually elated in anticipating the holiday. She seemed delighted as a little child, at the prospect of getting out in the dear old woods. As I listened to her enthusiastic accounts of the nice times she had enjoyed years before, when her only brother, whom she now met but rarely, had been her companion, I wanted to ask all the girls to come and see how really handsome her animation made her. None of us doubted but that Madame Boalt would readily give her consent to our plans, as a group of us went merrily, in the name of all, to ask it. The desired permission, for most of us, was given as soon as asked; then she made some exceptions of those girls who had been lately delinquent in their studies, and, as we were about to leave, she added, as an after-thought—

"Tell Lottie this will be a fine opportunity for her to complete that large map she has commenced. I think her good sense will convince her that she will find a longer lived pleasure in doing this, than in straying in the woods with you idlers." Lottie thus to be kept at home with the poor scholars! It roused my indignation, and I said earnestly:

"But, madame, you do not mean that Lottie must not go, do you?"

"I do not think she will wish to go, when she knows, how she may please me better:" was the cold response, as she turned to her book with an air which forbade further interruption.

Lottie was sadly disappointed, yet I vainly begged her to go to Madame herself, for the desired permission—I was sure, her request would be granted, for she was justly a favorite with all the teachers. The only motive, which had any weight with her, was that I should enjoy the day better for her companionship, but this she would scarcely allow. She did not try to conceal the fact that it seemed almost like an unjust punishment, from me.

"It has always been the way," said she, "I ought to be accustomed to it. Madame has no idea that the glorious old woods, with their gala dress and golden light, have as great a charm for me, as for the rest of you. She does not imagine I have any feelings, so she appeals to my good sense. O dear, I believe I wish I had not the name of having good sense. I could not, however, enjoy the day, now, were I to go, since I should keep think-

ing of our teacher's wishes, so I may as well be contented."

Sadly, Lottie made her preparations for a busy day, and then came out as cheerfully, to see us start away, as though she were not longing to join us.

"I should think, you would like to come with us," said Hattie W——.

"And I should think so too, if Madame had not told me better," was the gay reply, as we left her.

Upon my return, I found her very cheerful. After hearing a prolix account of our day's pleasure, from me, she said, "You seem to think I have nothing pleasant to tell you, and truth to say, I was tempted to look at the cloudy side of everything this morning; but I determined that, if I could not please myself, I would, at least, please Madame, so I went to work on that map, with a *will*, and worked till I was very weary? Then I took a run in the garden, which rested me. As I came in, I found poor little Nellie Otis disconsolate over those knotty algebraic problems, which prevented her going with you, and I helped her some. Indeed, as soon as I convinced her that being kept at home was not the most doleful thing in the world, she could help herself. Since then, I have finished my map, and Madame has praised it altogether beyond my expectations; but the very best thing of the day is this letter, which tells me that brother Charles is coming here next week. If I am not mistaken, you and I will have his company for a nutting excursion, which shall put your to-day's pleasure all in the shade."

Thus Lottie was rewarded for her self-denial this time, as well as many others, which I might note. When she denied herself anything, she never made a merit of it, or allowed it to occupy her thoughts, but sought some occupation, from which she could draw cheerfulness.

Gradually, Lottie became a universal favorite in school. Her own quick feelings led her intuitively to avoid wounding those of others, and now that she felt herself beloved, she did not check those social impulses, which made her a delightful companion.

Enough has been said of Lottie, as a school girl, let me briefly picture her as a woman. Our friendship was no slight tie, to be broken by our separation. For two years we were constant correspondents, then, Lottie came to our village as my sister. Brother Edward certainly would have deserved my warmest thanks, for bringing one so dear to me to his home, had he not been actuated by wholly sel-

fish motives. He does not regret, however, that in insuring his own happiness, he has increased mine.

Now, as in the olden time, Lottie is better than I. Now, she is very happy. "The clouds came in my spring time," I have heard her say, "and they made me old in childhood, but I am younger now." In truth, she is livelier than when I first knew her, yet hers is a sportiveness which enlivens, without ever becoming mere levity. She neglects no home duty. Her husband ever finds, that no engagement of hers can interfere with his pleasure, and her children are never yielded to the care of hirelings, unworthy her confidence; yet she finds time for social duties. This time is not frittered away in gossip, for she lives in earnest. "That I may be better; that others may be happier"—seems the motto of her life, and others are certainly happier for her thoughtful kindness. Her cheerful face gladdens many a sick room—her few, earnest words of Christian consolation, reach bereaved hearts, which would be oppressed by more studied phrases. She is loved and respected by a large circle of friends and acquaintances, but most do we rejoice in her many virtues and graces, who are admitted to a closer intimacy in her pleasant home circle.

LOVE IN THE COUNTRY.

BY KLUTZ.

PART I.

A great judge, now living, frequently tells his students that love, law and liquor do not agree well together. He found them, however, as everybody finds them, much too often, in the masculine gender, plural number, and same hard case; and whether these were exceptions to his learned *dictum* or not, certain it is, that they took exception to it—qualifying their resentment, nevertheless, by many a stout bumper to his honour's health. But it is not to the school of this eminent lawyer that I wish to direct the indulgent reader's attention; that of another legal gentleman contains my hero—who, in some degree, will illustrate the above judicial alliteration.

Harry Jenkins was this young jurist-prudent—if the word *prudent*, in any connection, could be properly applied to him. He was a youth of *esprit*, and, of course, on occasion had joined in a spree. Several “animated busts,” indeed, had led Mr. Jenkins, *senior*, into the selection of the present retreat for his son; for “spirits” here were difficult to get; they seldom came when you “did call for them;” and when procured, they certainly were *not* “made perfect.” The *senior* doubtless hoped that his son would be benefited by a change of air—especially as he had devised wise ways and means to prevent the raising of that “wind” that had hitherto been so injurious to the flighty Harry. At any rate, rural nature was a better *restaurant* than those of town, and to untamed blood, the wilds of woods were less hurtful than metropolitan wiles. The arrangement, too, was agreeable enough to friend Hal, who reasonably conjectured that the filial exertions to throw dust into the old man's eyes might prove more successful at a distance. Besides, (notwithstanding the paternal measures in that regard,) he learned that while “distance” was only noted for lending enchantment “on

sight,” she was also capable of other loans on more accommodating terms,

The family in which Henry Jenkins was so fortunate as to obtain a place, was that of an old farmer, Mr. Tucker. It consisted of the farmer himself, Mrs. Tucker, and their grand-daughter, Miss Mary Tucker. Of course, the farm had its dozen of negroes, or so. The house was a modern frame one, of good size, with piazzas in front, upstairs and down; and in the rear was a goodly porch, covered in summer with the climbing, clustering vines of the sweet-scented honeysuckle. It was situate upon an eminence which, still in the original growth of oaks, came up gently to the front, and then suddenly swept down beyond the dwelling to the valley brook, that murmured and rippled there through the shade. Across this little stream the country rose and broke into several wooded hills, and upon their mimic heights the cabins of the negroes were picturesque disposed. The school of law was quite two miles away, and there were the nearest neighbors to be found. Harry owed his good fortune in securing so pleasant a temporary home, to the fact that his father was the agent and consignee of Mr. Tucker—a mutual confidence and friendship naturally arising out of the frequent and honest dealings between the two.

Mr. Tucker was a hale, blunt, merry old fellow, who still directed, personally, his own farming operations. Mrs. Tucker was a nice, good woman, in her odd way. Tall and slim, without hoops to her limp dress, she was thus witch-like, that she always looked, to use a common comparison, as if she had just been drawn through a key-hole. Her pale, thin features were surmounted and bordered by an immense white cap, and the glasses that were forever astride her nose were equally as great spectacles to see as they were to see with. Whether this worthy family was in any way connected with

the cognominal Daniel, who was once popularly supposed to have come on some, doubtless, important occasion too late for supper, it were needless to inquire, as that gentleman has long since "got out of the way," in compliance with the moving adjuration so to do.

But, Miss Tucker—she was pretty. Many, careless of their words, have called her beautiful. Not I. Let me give a few hints that may serve to indicate the style of her countenance and general appearance. To attempt more were surely to act preposterously. Miss Mary, then, in brief, was in her seventeenth year, slight in form and stature, with a face inclined to the oval, ripe, blushing complexion, dark blue eyes, and plenty of the finest black hair. Her glance had a merry twinkle, and her nose a merry set. For hands, she had a pair of the smallest, plumpest dumps of things in the world. A dear little wretch! But, believe me, this is no description of the girl I love. Don't think it! *She is a very commonplace being, and, after a strict and philosophical investigation, (at which kind friends of both sexes cheerfully assisted,) I am arrived at the conclusion that her only charm consists of (as usual, bless you!) her inveterate dislike of me. Never mind, never mind, Miss! never you mind!*

Harry's preceptor lectured and examined semi-occasionally—thereby displaying his knowledge of the slow progress, in professional acquisitions, of all young lawyerlings. Of course, Jenkins, Jr., considered his time free, when fear of disgrace did not force him into Blackstone; nor will this veracious history of him conflict with the truth of that poetry which declares, that "Satan still some mischief finds for idle hands to do." Love is frequently a flower, as the excellent Tupper most solemnly assures us: *Love in idleness.*

Here they were—Harry and Molly—perforce thrown together day after day, evening after evening. They appeared to be afraid of each other at first, and they met at table to the manifest danger of a lingering and mutual starvation.

For there they sat mincing their bread-and-butter, as though they disdained it, and were merely making a polite concession to the vulgar prejudice in favour of eating. And then when their eyes met—as meet they *would*—he would become slightly confused, and she would blush, she would—all in the silliest and un-bon-ton-ishest manner in life. So things progressed. Slowly enough—and yet, fast enough. No doubt. Clearing his throat—it becoming woefully obstructed all at once—he would faintly assert that the time was fine, ahem! that is, the day was cloudy, a little, rather, did'nt she think so? *Very fine!* that is, very, very cloudy. But the sun, may-be, might shine, perhaps, if the sky cleared before sunset! The weather, meanwhile, might have been neither, and was in a most unsettled state, as far as their decision was concerned.

Scarce a week elapsed, and these young rogues were as thick as—thieves!

It was a summer evening; the light wind softly pushing through the bowery woods and fluttering over the ripening fields; katydids, solitude's own melodists, chirping their timid notes into the grand bass of silence; and the moon, bending toward the west, making here a gloom where fear might cower, and there an argent glory for love and sweet romance. Yon dropping meteor might have fallen from pale Luna's eye! What time, the older folk abed, the younger were enjoying the loveliness and charmed influence of nature—a blessedness which they felt, but hardly understood. Harry Jenkins, from his room-window, had stepped upon the upper piazza, and in the lower one sat the musing Mary Tucker—each one unconscious that the other was looking upon the same scene, and, perhaps, with like emotions. A "piece of song," sung plaintively and low, a thing beguiled from her, doubtless, by the night, informed Harry that she was there. Leaning over her, he looked and listened until she had finished, and then, by a bold movement that even surprised himself, he was at her side. Seizing one of the pillars nearest

her, he slid down it suddenly into her startled presence. She gave a quick cry of alarm; but in a moment both were laughing; and so was that double traitor, shyness, slain.

"I thought it was somebody," said she, simply.

"And you were greatly mistaken?" laughed he. "Well, I discovered that you were examining the moon, and I have come to help you; for it is a curious, but a well established fact, that the effectual observation of that planet requires two persons."

"Rather, then, than keep you from sleep and study," said she, mischievously, "I will get grandma to assist me."

"Don't trouble yourself, and her, I beg," rejoined Harry, "for I will endeavour to keep my eyes open, and I think I can resist any temptation to study. Mrs. Tucker wouldn't do at all, anyhow, because the parties must be young, they say, and of different sexes."

"I don't want assistance from anybody, to-night."

"A remark that cannot apply to me, as you have already agreed that I am nobody."

"Then I don't want nobody," insisted Miss Mary.

"An error in English," rejoined Harry, "that it surprises me to hear you make."

"If you *will* stay," she said, "look at the moon, and not at me!"

"Very good. And now I am viewing it under more favourable circumstances than I have ever done before. How astonishingly clearly I can see! The common idea that there is a man in it must be false, for I see a most beautiful girl there. Look! how lovely is she! O I could worship her! There is just one white glimpse of neck and shoulders, and there is the rounded little chin; the mouth—'an opening rosebud filled with snow'—the dearly beloved nose, her delicate, yet full cheeks, dark, melting eyes, penciled eyebrows, the modest forehead of ivory, and a wealth, a glory of soft black hair! How charming a vision!"

"Your description gives a most hideous personage!" said Miss Tucker.

"Ah, how vain is language!" cried Harry, turning to her; "but, that she is most beautiful—eh!—by Jove!—what!—how odd!—and yet it must be! A most remarkable phenomenon, Miss Mary, and yet I ought not to have been so stupid as not to recognize it once! The moon to-night is verily a mirror, reflecting your own face!"

"Very remarkable, and very stupid!" repeated she.

"Do you not behold?" he exclaimed, theatrically.

"I see no girl there," she replied, laughing, "but the same ugly man I see as distinctly as he ever was seen, I suppose."

"That is not me," said he, most seriously. "But I've heard of him, confound him! His name is Grant—Bob Grant, or something. A hideous personage, I've no doubt!"

"What do you mean?" asked Miss Mary, a little bewildered by his rapid utterance. "You must not abuse a cousin of mine in that way; and you don't know him, I'm sure."

"You are right! That is a bit of ignorance that is quite a blessing to me, and I trust I may never lose it by my own folly. What I know of him is unhappiness enough to me!"

"I would congratulate you," she said, *sarcastically*, "on your vast fund of bliss in reference to all subjects, if I didn't know that your foolishness is fully equal to the task of destroying it. Cousin Robert will be here to-morrow, and I'll leave it to your wisdom to avoid him."

"Coming! to-morrow! Sunday?"

"Yes; and there is preaching."

"Oh!" exclaimed Harry, *affectedly*:

"Oh! that the desert were my dwelling-place,

With one fair spirit for my minister,
That I might all forget the human race,
And, hating none, love but only her!"

"And she, if any one," said Miss Tucker, "will be

'Solitude! romantic maid!'

Who will minister to you, through trees,
brooks and stones."

"Aye," responded the flippant youth:
"and the fathers of the church seem to
recollect what Shakspeare says, as they
often give stones when their children
want bread."

"Ah, the devil may *cite* Scripture, you
know!"

"True; but his aim is so ill that he
usually misses."

The moon, in her steady course, had
now sunk, until the clustering trees
around flung one unbroken shadow upon
the pair. A mocking-bird in the covert
of a neighboring rose-bush, sleepless as
so sweet a poet should be on such a
night, suddenly began her varied song,
and

"Music waked around, veiled in a shower
Of shadowing roses."

Ever and anon the fond songstress would
quit her odorous retreat, and, with open
throat still pouring melody, soar up, and
up, and up, as she would rival the lark
that "sings hymns at heaven's gate." As
she rose higher and higher in the
high distance, her exquisite sonnet fell
faintly and more faintly, till the ear was
almost pained lest one note should be
unheard; and then, as with reluctant
wing she slowly returned to earth, her
little self invisible, her approach was
marked by the gradual increase in sound
of the mellifluous voice—the chant hush-
ing only amid the fragrant flowers where
it began.

"The very incarnation of the tune-
ful!" said the young lady.

"*Vox, et pretereæ nihil!*" was the re-
sponse.

"And what is that?"

"It means that the bird is all song,
and nothing but song."

"In what sweet harmony it was with
all around and above!" she said.

"It was the very 'food of love,'" he
answered:

"O it came o'er my ear like the sweet
south,

That breathes upon a bank of violets,
Stealing and giving odor!"

And he sighed.

"Sighing—as I live?"

"And man the hermit sighed till wo-
man smiled," quoted he.

"Then be cured of your 'suspension
of forced breath' immediately," retorted
she, "for I am not only smiling, but
laughing at you!"

"Let us take a stroll," suggested Har-
ry. "You are not sleepy, nor I. We'll
go down the avenue, and up the lane, to
where the woods close in upon the road,
and then back again. By that time, may
be, we will have acquired an appetite for
our pillows."

"Feathers would be a light diet, tru-
ly!" laughed she. "But I have no
bonnet."

"Nor I a hat. No matter. It is so
pleasant that we can go as we are. You
have a handkerchief, though; let me tie
it over your hair and under your chin.
There. Won't you take my arm?"

"No."

So they walked forth, down the avenue
and up the lane, and on to where the
shadows of the forest swallowed up the
road. Through the sudden dark shade
into the sudden bright light they went,
talking the while as none but those like
them could talk. Here the startled part-
ridge whirled away; here the dove,
aroused by their step, beat her musical
flight; and there the lark, that had nes-
tled long time doubtful of the hour, con-
firmed by their approach that morn was
come, sprang high in air, hunting for
the sun. The Indian had once skulked
through the ambush of those old trees,
making them shudder in every twig and
leaf at his fearful tread; and the gentle
breeze that gambolled there now had
aforetime swooned away beneath the
dreadful war-whoop. How changed for
the better!

"How softly the moonlight sleeps
upon that bank!" said the young man.
"Let us rest there a moment or two."

"No; we'll return home, and follow
the somnolent example of the moon-
light"

"I have never felt before as I do to-night," remarked Harry. "Everything is new, and fresh, and delightful to me. For the first time, I recognize the truth of Cowper's line:

God made the country, and man made the town!"

"And here," said she, "were His 'first temples,' and He has never deserted them."

PART II.

Next morning both showed an astonishing increase of appetite. The old couple looked on, well pleased, but somewhat amazed.

"You and Mary," said the grandfather, "must have taken early exercise."

"No, sir," answered Mr. Jenkins, looking at the young lady with a smile.

"We took it last night, grand-pa," she said, "we had a fine moonlight walk."

"I'm glad," said the old gentleman, "that it has done you both so much good. You had better keep up the practice."

After breakfast Harry found Miss Mary in a pensive attitude on the piazza. She was so deep in thought that she scarcely noticed his approach.

"An old Roman has observed," he said to her, "*mulier quæ sola cogitat, male cogitat.*"

"It is Greek to me," she answered carelessly.

"Then let me give you the translation: She who thinks by herself, thinks evil. How do you like it?"

"As little as it seems to like me, and less."

"I'll render it more freely, thus: The single woman who thinks at all, thinks of a male. Isn't that better and truer?"

"Worse and false," she replied; "and either way it is vain and abusive. You should let the dead lie in peace."

"Don't quarrel with the Latin," said he, "for it speaks though dead, as much

good as ill of you. Besides, of the dead *nil nisi bonum*,—which does not exactly mean *nothing but bones*, though it plainly indicates that abuse of the departed will incur Shakspeare's malediction:

'Cursed be he that moves my bones!'"

"The only piece of the language that I recall at present," said Miss Mary, archly, "is *ne quid nimis*."

"And you understand it—how?"

"That you should not chew tobacco in the presence of a lady!"

"Ha, ha," laughed Harry, quickly ejecting the obnoxious weed, "to do so is surely too much of one thing, even if it is a good thing. But, really, I did not expect to find you here, and when I saw you I forgot."

"Which shows," she remarked, "how slight a connection there is between your mind and mouth."

"There is small profit," Harry rejoined, smiling, "in arguing with one who reasons in a circle—so logicians say; and I quite agree with them, especially since the circle has become so extended. Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'm glad," said Miss Tucker. Won't you sit?"

"Obliged—no. Let me lounge upon this railing at ease, without dignity. Upon my word, in a chair I don't know to manage either my arms or my legs,—it puts my limbs in actual limbo. By the by, a pretty cousin of mine writes that she is *steadying the French*. What a Napoleonic task! How hopeless, indeed! What can she mean?"

"That she is studying French, perhaps."

"By the dictionary, though, murdering the English is no unlikely way to effect her avowed object!" cried he. "So the vulgar *u* had to give place to *ea*. There, surely, was another '*Martyr d'une diphthongue*,' as Boileau has it. But words, to be sure, like princes and lords,

'may flourish, or may fade,
A breath can make them, as a breath has made.'"

"How many pounds in weight have

you lost during the past week?" the young lady merrily asked.

"None. I think I have gained. Why do you ask?"

"Why, what have you lived on?"

"As one who loves should—on air!"

"Ah: that explains your increased talkativeness; but so weak a sustenance for a week should have dried you up and blown you away."

"And you—you have eaten since my coming as if the wing of a lark, ay, or even one pea, would surfeit you; and, really, I have feared that, notwithstanding tea was still your diet, you would shortly make a die of it, and like a gambling suicide, lose all upon it."

"I had my snacks and lunches," laughed Miss Mary, "but you—it was very amusing to see you starving yourself to hide your town-bred impudence; endeavouring to

'Assume a virtue though you had it not.'

Appearing too modest to look at one, unable to say Boo! to a goose, and now"—

"And now, I suppose, I say a thousand things to a duck! Well, when Mr. Grant comes I'll show you that I can cry Boo! at a goose, too."

"Mind how you talk to him, and of him, also," said she saucily. "And yonder, his buggy is just now turned into the avenue."

"*Parlez-moi l'âne, et l'on en voit les oreilles!*" repeating the Gallic proverb.

Sure enough, there a flashing new buggy and harness, and a shining black horse, came trotting on. The lone occupant of the vehicle was evidently arrayed in his best store-clothes—his blue swallow-tail flaming with huge brass buttons. As soon as he discovered that his cousin Mary was looking towards him, he was not too distant, though certainly a good way off, to raise his glossy hat high in air—whereby he uncovered a closely cropped crop of the reddest hair.

"I doubt," said Harry, "that all his imperfections are on his head. And why has he a buggy? What use has he for a buggy?"

"To give me rides, to be sure, and to carry me to meetings!"

"Humph!" was Harry's dissatisfied comment.

A buggy is a good thing to have in the country, as Mr. Sparrowgrass would say. In some parts of the country, mind you. There are rural regions where the convenient vehicle is no novelty, but, on the contrary, a very nuisance. Such districts may be said to be altogether too buggy. Every big and little bug rolls his fortune along the highways and by-ways, until a horse-back is considered a rather low way of locomotion, and even the *bridal-paths* grow impassable to the equestrian and the yet more humble pedestrian. Here, however, Mr. Robert Grant owned the sole known carriage of the kind, to the tremendous jealousy of the young men, and to the wild delight of emulative maidens. Moreover, cousin Robert was rich: rich in *præsentia*, richer in *futuro*. The evil of wealth lay heavily upon him, and yet he bore the sad burden with exemplary patience. We who are oppressed by an accumulation of this world's goods can appreciate his pitiable condition, and admire his fortitude; but the simple folk who knew him thought that he was fortunate and happy. Some even envied him; while a charitable few exerted themselves by constant plucking, to prevent the growth of those wings to which riches betake them and fly away. And the girls—they are never so foolish, anywhere, as to make a watch-case for him who has no time-piece, nor to knit him a purse who has not the where-withal to fill it—though everybody must remark that they bestow book-marks most where there is best need for them. They never fall in love with Lazarus or any of his kin, when Dives is practicable—usually. Nine out of ten, or in ten, either, keep an eye on the main chance, putting off love in a cottage for the last chance. Of course, then, all the dear creatures were "agreeable" to Mr. Grant, and quite willing to take his side in the buggy, or for the journey of life in that metaphorical concern, drawn by the equally metaphoric "mare," an

animal that everybody knows money "makes to go."

Here he is now, alighting: surrounding darkies struggling for the honour and pleasure of taking his horse in charge, and making the air resound with their hospitable welcome of,

"How d'ye, Marse Robbut! How d'ye, Marse Robbut!"

And now upon the pinzza Mr. Tucker, and Mrs. Tucker, and Miss Mary, are gathered to him, with smiling faces, extended hands, and cheery voices of friendly inquiry and reception. Mr. Harry Jenkins is quite in the background for the time—critical! How stupidly ill-dressed the fellow is, he says to himself; and how awkward and coarse! What a rough freckled complexion, what a lump of a nose, and his mouth, like that of a river, the widest part of him! Slouching, too, like a ploughman! *He my rival! a rich idea! a foeman worthy of my steel! faugh!*

Yes, Master Harry, this arrival may prove no despicable a rival, and if the idea is not rich, *he is*. As for your steel, why, his gold may be the more attractive metal, sir!

The young men were introduced to each other. Chairs were placed for a cosy conversation. And then crops, prices, sickness, births, deaths, marriages and meetings, were discussed *ad nauseam*, as for Mr. Jenkins. The amiable Robert at last turned to him for news, and soon put him down by the very identical process employed a week before, with the same result, by Mr. Tucker. Young men about town, hear me! hear wisdom: Before you venture among farmers get the latest *prices current* by heart! A knowledge of what things are "doing" and "fetching," is that which makes clerks so popular with old country folk. Never, on any account, affect facetious replies to *Agricola's* inquiries. If he asks,

"What's eggs?"

"Eggs is eggs," you must not answer;—for thereby you will offend grammar and the old gentleman, to the loss of the pretty daughter.

Mr. Robert Grant and Mr. Harry Jenkins made no great progress in friendship.

The preaching is over, cousin Robert is gone, and the sun has bowed to the moon and given place. Mr. Harry was too cruelly selfish to let Miss Mary jaunt in the buggy to church that day,—he managed that all the party should walk. Present all the time, he prevented any private sayings between the cousins. There he was always, with eyes, ears, tongue, ever alert and active. Mr. Grant's visit, therefore, was rather a sad failure. The kitchen is well aware of the fact, and the kitchen is somewhat thoughtful, foreboding—prophetic! Your nigger is learned in winds, social and domestic. Your nigger keeps eye upon young Miss—the veering welcomer of every gale; the bright, the beautiful, and *the vane*—wonders, ponders, and often blunders to the truth.

"Marster Jinkins," said old aunt Betsy, whose spinning-wheel, save on Sundays, hummed all the day and far into the night, "Marster Jinkins," said she, "is a nice young gentleman—powerful. I'm a-smokin his terbacker now, an mighty good it is—powerful. But, what's a pipe o' terbacker agin young Miss an Marse Robbut? We's well nuff off, I knows, considerin; but we an the Grants al'ays marries in an in, in an in—ever so fur back—al'ays in an in. Who's married? a Grant an a Tucker, a Tucker an a Grant—all the time. Black an white, we's all kin. My own, own daddy was a Grant. But, this terbacker, I mus say, is a *leettle* the bes' terbacker that *ever* I smoke, an me an smokin's kep cump'ny fur a-gwine on fifty year. Monsus terbacker, monsus, an a fine gentleman—powerful."

"I don't want a town marster," observed uncle Isaac, "no ways. I knows Marse Robbut, an I don't know Mister Jinkins. He's on'y the rise of a week here, an in time, may-be, his good natur 'll gin out, an his terbacker, likways, an similarly."

"The Lord furbid!" devoutly ejaculated aunt Betsy.

"An ef he is free-hearted," continued

old Ike, "when the money's gone then the niggers goes. I gits on the block: 'How much for this ole rascal? gwine, gwine, gwine, an a keep a-gwine—gone! who is it?' The ole devil,---an I don't stop a-gwine: I goes to the Alabam or to Massissip, on a voyage of diskivery, an I finds what I don't want, an a perlentty of it. Don't tell me---ah, Lord! And then the blessed young Miss gits poor, an into truble---ah, Lord fend it! On tother side o' the fence, there's Marse Robbut. Peroperty nuff, an niggers accordin. *He* won't th'ow his money away. Them as hasn't got it is the ones that spends it here, and gives it thar, an chunks the moon wi' it!"

"True fur you, uncle Isaac," said aunt Betsy. "True fur you---powerful."

"Ah-h-h, Lor-r-r-rd!" sighed Isaac, rubbing his hands together, hard.

Aunt Betsy groaned, and shook her old head, and swayed herself to and fro.

After several ineffectual efforts, old uncle Ike began an "old and antique song," in a voice low, broken and tremulous---but gaining force, volume and smoothness as he went on. Betsy put by her pipe forthwith, interlaced her fingers on her lap, closed her eyes, turned her good old face upward, and then joined in with the full power of her lungs. Swelling, falling, echoing---sweet, awe-inspiring, wild---the untutored tongues and throats pour the grand earnestness of simple and adoring hearts. You will hear its like nowhere but upon the plantation, or at the meetings of plantations. Nor Handel, nor Haydn, nor Mozart, has scored that music. Books know it not. God gives it and He receives it.

It reached the ears---aye, hearts---of Mary and Harry, stilling their trifling talk with its solemn yet pleasant pervasion. The mocking-bird kept mute beneath it, listening.

Did they take their walk under the moon that night? Yes: they walked under the moon that night, and many another night. How can such things be, and love not grow apace? Cousin Robert comes and goes, but Harry is always there, and always with cousin Molly.

The neighbours notice: people for miles around are talking about it---as country people will notice and talk. Bulletins of the progress of affairs are scattered nights and Sundays, from farm to farm, by the communicative negroes. Then do friends, male and female, related or unrelated, come to Mr. Tucker, and to Mrs. Tucker, and to Miss Mary Tucker, with that stupidest of human vices---advice. *If I were you*---said every one. But *I was not you*, and never was you, and never will be you---nor wouldn't be on any imaginable account.

What bird---what buzzard was it that so speedily gave the "required information" about Harry, about Harry's father, about everything? Young men from town are all dissipated, and Harry is worst of all. His father held him the saddest of reprobates, the wildest of the wild, and had sent him from home with but slight hope of reformation. The senior Jenkins himself was hardly better off than a bankrupt. And on the contrary---Robert Grant! If Robert Grant wouldn't do, why, there were others. If country-folk got iron and sugar and salt from town, that was no reason it should also supply them with husbands. It was well enough to procure necessities there, but a town-bred husband might prove a luxury much more ornamental than useful. Such was the uncharitableness of these charitable people!

The old grand-parents were annoyed and uneasy; Miss Molly was annoyed and vexed; and Henry was annoyed and indignant. It was his private opinion, (vain youth!) sometimes expressed, that he would be very acceptable either as a son-in-law, or husband, to any of the busybodies: if which were true, the busybodies surely evinced a remarkable appreciation of Miss Tucker's merits, by unanimously voting him unworthy of her. So magnanimous can people be sometimes!

"Ah, uncle Jerry, this will never do," said Miss Tucker to an old darky whom she discovered one Monday morning skulking, with his bundle, towards the cabin which he called his. "Grand-pa

let you have all Saturday afternoon, and now you've taken a good part of to-day. He'll be angry with you."

"Why, Miss Molly, berless yer purty heart!" began the ancient rogue, "*ef* I'd a berliefed it *ef* I hadn't uv a seed it—as I'm a stannin here a lookin at yer wi' all mer eyes—an ter ber shore it's a joy ter ber peroud uv ter jest look at yer—berlessed Marister above! An all ther young gentlemen a tellin uv me uv it Satdy, an yisdy, an as I's comin along ter-day—mer eterernal Marister! Saze they to me—all ther quolity gentlemen—ah, you know um! nun o' yer poor bresh-heaps—they saze ter me, Ole Jerry, yer young Missis is cher-r-armin, an I saze, yer right, a rale lily o' the vally an a mounting rose. Saze they agin, she's a angerel—an thar, jest thur at that pint, I made a stan, I did—heavings perardon me! an I sayed, no, young bosses, no! an they was a gwine ter thrash Ole Jerry, kaze Ole Jerry sayed, bein uv a poor humble Christian, thrat yer wernt a angerel! But, now, a beholdin uv yer wi' these two eyes, I shill say, *ef* thar ever was a angerel 'pon yeth, I'm a seein uv her!"

"You've been drinking, Jerry!" said Miss Tucker sharply.

"*Ef* yer aint allers right, I aint here, a bit uv it!" said Jerry. "I *hev* bin a takin uv a drap o' bitters, an nubbudy but sich a cute, knowin lady as you ud ever 'spectid it—berless yer purty heart! Yer too sharp fer ignunt ole Jerry, thrat yer is! Week afore las I stops ther Doctor on ther road—a savin of Marister's money, yer see—I'm allers a doin uv mer indevvors to save Marister's money—an I tells him how I has bad days an oneasy nights, an I tells him uv mer miseries in mer head, an in mer back, an in mer arms, an in mer legs—I do—an uv a feelin I hev in mer stummick, a kind o' all-gone-ishness, a fulness like, an a emtiness. Saze he ter me, Ole Jerry, you git yer ole dooman to take roots—a namin uv ther roots ter me—an byark—a namin uv the byark—an let her bile um till ther sof an souky like, an then dry um, an then put um

inter a quart jurg. An then, saze he, yer'll git a quart o' sperrits—not grog-shop, derunkin stuff—but ther jinnywine articul, fresh and sweet an ondefiled from ther still—ther which yer mus pour on-too ther roots an byark, an drink—fur it'll do yer good, Ole Jerry, saze ther Doctor, an it's onposserbul fur it ter do yer harm, saze he. An ter not done what he sayed, would hev bin a sinnin agin light an nollege, an a diggin uv mer own grave!"

"And you have the jug of bitters with you, I perceive," remarked Miss Mary.

"*Ef* yer aint right agin," cried Jerry, berless yer! I *hev* a drap ur two, ur, may-be, three draps, fur suddint ertacks, wropped up in this ole hakercher, an *ef* I don't hev it by me constunt I'm subjick ter be tuck off enny minit. Mr. Wottle's young scarp, Sam, liked fur ter hev fixed me yisdy at ther meetin, ther despurt rapprobate, by a deprivin o' me uv mer bitters, an I overcum ull at ther wunst. A blarstid young devil's imp, he is! Not satersfied by a keepin uv me from ther axercises us was a gwine on luvly, luvly—mer mussiful Marister above! a huntin uv mer bitters, he cum nigh onto a breakin up ther meetin, he did, a young pre-des-tined vilying! He cum a offerin all ther gals snuff, an, as snuff they wanted, snuff they tuck, an sich a usin uv it—a layin uv it aside unly fur singin, an now an then, maybe, fur shoutin. But it turned out that it want snuff, an Sam had ter be uv a whisperin it aroun, an it got ter ther gals as they was a snuffin away cumferable, an then sich a gittin sick, an a richin, an a veromitin, yer *nev-er* seed ther like! We ole leaders thort our yearnest pertishuns had begin ter move um, an we had a happy time uv it fur awhile, till sam on um tole us that Sam Wottle had pizened um all wi' his mars-ter's guanny—ther which he'd stole—ther Lord look down apun us!"

"You old hypocrite," said the laughing girl, "begone to your work."

"*Ef* I didn't like ter forgit it," cried the devout Jerry, "may I never see ther kingdom! I has a message fer yer,

—berless yer purty heart uv yer! I meets Marso Robbut on ther way yiaady, an he questioned o' me, an he questioned o' me, all 'bout Mister Jinkings an 'bout you, but I saze nothin, I does; an then he tells me thrat the camp-meetin at Jerico begins nex Fridy, and thrat he's a comin ter carry yer thar in his buggy Satdy, shore; an yer musn't dis pint him, he sez. Them was his words ter me, fur you. He'll be here, shore."

"Very well—now hurry to your business," said Miss Mary, turning away.

"Berless yer purty heart!" said the old negro, "don't you go a botherin uv yerself ter tell Marster thrat I'm late—Jerry's a ole nigger, an *he* kin do thrat. Yer a walkin away jest like the queen uv Shibby an Sollermun all in one—berless yer—yer apple o' Ole Jerry's eye—Providence save yer!"

In his cabin uncle Jerry took bitters for his own health, and to Miss Mary's, and then he sneaked afield with many a ready lie for his master, should he encounter him.

PART III.

A camp-meeting is more of a social gathering than anything else. There friends, relations and acquaintances meet, who, otherwise, perhaps, would never meet. Of course, then, everybody through the country, in reasonable reach of Jericho, was eager to go thither, and waggons, carriages, and horses were in strong demand. The chance that Mr. Grant had offered to Miss Tucker was altogether too good a one to be declined, as in that event she would have to ride the long distance a-horse-back, if she went at all. Mr. Jenkins had to take his fate in such humour as he could. He was resolved, though, that he would not stay behind, and procuring a horse from Mr. Tucker, he set out for Jericho with the cousins.

Harry, for the first few miles, was now a little ahead of the buggy, then by

the side of it, and now close in the rear. A most vigilant escort was he! But, at length, he began to linger behind, and to shout to cousin Robert not to leave him, as he was totally unacquainted with the route. Under these circumstances progress was rather slow. The buggy had to stop frequently for the horseman to catch up. Mr. Grant grew impatient.

"I shall drive on," said he, "let him take care of himself."

"You shall not leave him," said Miss Tucker firmly.

"I say," shouted cousin Robert to Harry, "you cut you a good big switch, and whip up your critter. It'll be night 'fore we get to Jericho, if we don't go faster."

Harry complied with the request, and off they started again.

"Woa! woa! woa!" cried Harry Jenkins at the rearward.

The buggy stopped, and its occupants looked back. Here came the old horse in a nondescript gait, with his rider perched awkwardly upon the saddle, and holding, as if desperately, to mane and saddle-bow. As the animal clattered up, Harry, all at once, lurched to one side, and down he came.

"Oh!" exclaimed the frightened girl. The astonished horse was looking curiously at his fallen rider. Mr. Grant sprang out to assist him.

"Are you hurt?" he asked. Harry arose, shook himself, looked around stupidly, and thought he was not injured.

"I don't see how you managed to get off," said Mr. Grant. "Try him again."

Harry shook his head dubiously, and Miss Mary, too, protested.

"Well, then," said cousin Robert, "what's to be done?"

"You'd better ride the horse, cousin Robert," softly insinuated his cousin, "and let him drive the buggy."

"That's a comfortable idea," he responded, "very!"

"Oh," said Harry, "I can walk, and will do so with pleasure."

The others agreed that that would never do.

"Get in the buggy, and come on as fast as you can!" cried Robert Grant, springing into the saddle, and dashing off rapidly, both to display his horsemanship and to relieve his suppressed feelings.

Harry was quickly seated at the side of Miss Mary.

"Didn't I do it finely?" he asked.

"What?"

"I don't believe there is another in this region of country that could fall off a horse as I did, without hurting himself!"

"A capital fall! Done with surprising skill, too! But it would have been more skilful to have been able to keep your saddle!"

"Ah, you think so! But suppose I didn't want to ride the horse, didn't want Mr. Grant to be with you, and wanted to be with you myself, as I am now?"

"Cousin Robert! cousin Robert!" called the young lady promptly.

Mr. Grant halted ahead. Harry drove up unconcernedly. Miss Mary glanced at his face, but he made no sign.

"What is it?" inquired Mr. Grant.

"How far are we from Jericho?" she asked simply.

"O, seven or eight miles, yet. Come on!" and away he trotted.

"You are really mean!" said she to Harry.

"All is fair in war and—" he hesitated.

"And what?"

"Love!"

She gave a sniff as if she would like to know what that had to do with it.

"I suffered," said Harry, "the extreme tortures to see him sitting here. It was more than I could endure, and I was willing to risk my neck to remedy it."

"Attend to the horse," she suggested.

"I care nothing for the horse, nothing for anything but you!" and he looked at her fixedly. She dropped her eyelashes.

"Drive on—please," she said.

Harry gave the horse a cut.

"I know," he continued, "what tales have been told you of me. I am aware

of all the efforts from every quarter to prejudice you against me. I know, too, that I have acted, to your knowledge, as if I were a careless, thoughtless, thriftless, 'ne'er do well.' But I believe that you have learned to estimate me more truly, in the few months of our acquaintance, than any one else in this world; for I have endeavoured to show you my whole nature—not even striving to hide what may be amiss in my character. What others think is nothing to me—but do you think me so worthless and bad?"

"Oh, no, and they are mistaken who say so," she replied readily.

"My acts towards you have spoken so plainly, that it is almost unnecessary for me to say—"

"Yes, quite unnecessary!" said she, rousing up merrily. "Whip up, and change the subject."

He drove on in silence some moments.

"I hope you do not dislike me," he said.

"On the contrary," she answered, "I like you very well. I dislike a very few people."

"And love none, may be."

"Oh, yes, I love my relations and friends."

"Ah, but there is another kind that is more than kin or kind, either, and leads, or should lead to—marriage!"

"I know nothing of *that*," she said.

"Well, I know something of it," said he, "and it has already changed several purposes of my life. In the first place, I intend to become a country gentleman."

"What! giving up your profession?"

"Yes:

'Are not these woods . . .

More free from peril than the envious courts?

Here feel we but the penalty of Adam,
The seasons' difference.' "

"Ah, 'the seasons' difference;' and when the freshness of spring is gone, when the fulness of summer and the

glory of autumn have passed away, how can you bear the country then,

'And churlish chiding of the winter's wind?' "

"Then she and I, who love each other, will enjoy

'Domestic happiness, the only bliss Of Paradise that has survived the *Fall*!' "

"*She*?" said Miss Mary. "I trust you may find her!"

"I have not far to seek," rejoined Harry as he seized her hand. She endeavoured to draw it from him, but he held it firmly.

"Now, pray," said he "be serious and honest and good to me for a few moments. Don't turn your face away, please, but look at me and hear me. You know I love you. I do love you most earnestly and purely. Can you love me? Do you love me? Will you love me? Be that *she* to me that we have just spoken of!"

She was silent—pale and trembling.

"I have seized your hand," he went on, "without asking you for it. May I have it? Let it be mine, and only mine, now and always? Give me some sign."

The red and white battled and mingled in her cheeks. She smiled and pressed his hand. He took her in his arms most lovingly and kissed her.

And there was cousin Robert close by, looking on and listening. They started apart in confusion.

While they had been so busily engaged, Mr. Grant had stopped to wait for them, and the neglected buggy-horse had come gradually to a halt as he drew near his master.

Sorrow, mortification, anger, were all plainly visible in Robert Grant's countenance as he hurried ahead at a furious gallop.

"Well, it can't be helped!" said Har-

ry, kissing her again. And then he thrashed the horse swiftly forward to make up for lost time.

I am afraid he kissed Miss Mary too often that afternoon. I am afraid that he now considered himself fully privileged in that regard. So tempting were those lips though!

Mr. Robert Grant took charge of his horse and buggy immediately after its arrival, and drove straightway off—leaving the lovers to get back home as best they could. Harry borrowed another horse and a side-saddle for Miss Mary, and, when they had enough of the religious proceedings, they rode away gaily together. In two weeks afterwards they heard of Mr. Grant's marriage in an adjoining county.

In due time the wedding of our lovers took place—in spite of much friendly counsel not to do so. All the counsellors, however, went to see the performance of the ceremony, and to partake of the good things. And I am happy to state that they ate and drank on the happy occasion with great good-will.

And so Harry Jenkins flung away ambition. Far away from the hot and dusty scuffle of life, he lives and loves. The gentleness of spring is his, the beauty of summer, and the gorgeous luxury of autumn. When the winds of winter shriek with cold around, when the snow storms down in blinding falls, when the crushing of trees in neighbouring forests tell that it is a night of fear—there is no fear in that rural home, nor unhappiness; for two who love each other fondly have leagued themselves in an indissoluble compact that excludes all else save the joys of a mutual trust and a mutual affection. The moon shines for them yet, and the mocking-bird has not yet forgotten to make musical the night. And when that love which the bird first serenaded shall grow cold, she will desert her rose-bush and still her song.

MABEL WARD,
THE POORHOUSE CHILD.
A STORY OF REAL LIFE.
BY CLARA AUGUSTA.

CHAPTER I.

"Yet I part not from my sorrow,
My glory, and my doom,
For the smiling of the May time,
The sunnier, or the bloom;
From the throbs of burning quickness
That once answered far away,
Over mountain, over water—
In the night, or in the day."

In the yellow light of a closing day in October, Hugh Barrington sat alone in his library. The sunbeams, streaming in at the western window, wove many a thread of gold with the dark brown of his hair; and set a halo above his pale, stern brow, like those we sometimes see in the pictures of glorified saints.

The people round about Glenton Priory shunned Hugh Barrington as they would have shunned a spectre. This feeling had not been the result of a day—it came upon them by a slow and gradual growth—it was a work of time; until his heart was known as a closed cabinet, upon whose contents none might look—to which no human hand held the key.

It was said that years before, when the present incumbent of the Priory was but nineteen years of age, a dream of love, and with it a foreboding glimpse of heaven, had flashed athwart the void of Hugh Barrington's life; and transmuted all his visions by its presence! It was in a distant land—where the young heir was travelling—and none knew the particulars of the affair, but it was certain that some terrible event had struck out the light and joy suddenly, and shockingly, from his vision.

No one ventured to surmise even the manner of this—one there were none bold enough to question the servants, who were, it was remarked, most of them, old men and women, who had grown gray in the service of the family. Visitors never came to the Priory; the wide drawing-rooms and tapestry hung parlors were opened only at Christmas, when the master, in solitary grandeur, burnt the Yule logs in the massive fireplaces, and partook of his sumptuous fare alone in the great dining-hall.

At first, after Hugh Barrington's arrival from abroad, there was much wonder among the families of the neighborhood at his singular conduct, but after the passage of five years, much the same in barrenness of incident, the owner of the Priory ceased to be the daily theme of conversation, and the plough-boy went whistling by the fine old house, without casting ominous glances over his shoulder in search of ghostly writhings.

Yet for all this seclusion, Mr. Barrington was a man of power in Glenton. His coffers overflowed from the receipts of his wide estates, and no appeal to his charity was ever made in vain. On this account he became respected, looked up to, and a little feared.

In person, Mr. Barrington was singularly striking, without being remarkably handsome. He was tall, and strongly-built, with a fine forehead, shaded by brown hair, soft and wavy as floss-silk. His features were naturally expressive, but a veil of impeneable reserve covered them, and the full but classically cut lips were compressed in a manner which evidenced their owner a man who could keep his own secrets. His eyes were the best feature of his face; there was more of life and feeling there, though but little hope, and often a great deal of something which cast down the curious eyes of those who sought to read Hugh Barrington's character in "the windows of his soul."

Such was the proprietor of Glenton Priory at the age of twenty-six. On this, the anniversary of his birth, Mr. Barrington sat alone in his library, musing, maybe, upon the past, or anticipating the future. He might have been doing the one or the other, for his thoughts wrote no tell-tale lines upon his face. There was a low tap upon the door, and a moment after an old servant entered the apartment.

"Well, James!" Mr. Barrington spoke in the tone of one who relied not on the interruption.

"Sir, there is a child without in the hall, asking to see the master of the Priory."

"Why not attend to her business, and send her away! You well know that I dislike a strange face, even if it belongs to a child!"

Still the servant waited in respectful silence until his master should see fit to signify his direct will—for he was well used to Mr. Barrington's fits of misanthropy.

"What, James? Still waiting? Anything more?"

"Begging your pardon, sir, I questioned the child of her wishes, but she said she would soon—



MABEL WARD'S SECOND VISIT TO MR. BARRINGTON.

or see the master. "A fair-haired child she is with blue eyes, much like the wild violets."

"A curse on blue eyes! a curse on them! I tell you!" and for a moment the face of Mr. Barrington gleamed with a fire almost demonic; then he regained his haughty self-control, and as if he had made no previous answer, said—"Ah, a pretty child, is she? Well, show her in!"

The servant went out, and in a few moments returned, followed by a girl ten or twelve years old, clad in the coarse garb which marked the inmates of the village almshouse. She was not a pretty child, but if you once looked at her face you were constrained to repeat your look again and again. Her complexion was browned by exposure to the sun and wind, and her bonnetless head was covered with a mass of light brown hair, which would have been beautiful, if it had not given you the idea of an eternal banishment of comb and brush.

Mr. Barrington had evidently forgotten his expected visitor, for he had taken up a pen and was writing rapidly in a black-covered volume of manuscript. After a while he looked up, and for the first time perceived the child, shrinking back closely against the dark green hangings of the room. He laid down the pen.

"So you are here? The little girl who wanted to see me? Well, child, come forward, and look at me."

His great searching eyes were bent upon her little timid face, and she trembled beneath their scrutiny. Slowly, and half-afraid, she moved out from the shadows, and up to the arm of his chair, still speechless.

"Your errand with me?"

The accustomed haughty imperiousness of the man displayed itself even to that puny child.

"Please, sir, I wanted two little red posies out here in your garden—I didn't like to ask the other man for 'em, for fear you'd be offended. Mr. Brown said you was proud and stuck up, and wouldn't give 'em to me if I got down on my knees to you, but I told her I meant to ask you! I didn't believe you was half so bad!"

An amused expression crept over Mr. Barrington's face at this somewhat equivocal flattery, and he motioned the child to an ottoman by his side.

"Mrs. Brown said so, did she? And who, pray, is Mrs. Brown?"

"She's John Brown's wife—the woman that keeps the poor-house."

"Ah!" he glanced down at his companion's garments. "So you reside there, under her care, do you?"

"I stay there, but precious little care she gives me! It takes her all the time with Sam and Bill, her twin babies. She says I am a little trollop, and not worth noticing! Am I a trollop, sir?"

"I'm sure I don't know, little girl—I never had much acquaintance with children—but what do you want the red flowers for?"

The blue eyes of the child filled with tears, and drooped sorrowfully to the carpet, her thin hands quivered a little, and her lips grew pale and grieved.

"I wanted them—don't be angry, sir—I wanted them to lay on my mother's grave, over there in the yard by the almshouse—she was

nobody but a pauper when she died, Mrs. Brown says; but I loved her, and I know that she would like to have some flowers near her, now she's asleep in the ground."

Mr. Barrington's eyes softened, and his mind went back to his own fair-browed mother; lying one morning, cold and white in her coffin, with the snow drops resting upon her snowier bosom. The one blessed and holy memory in the seared-up heart of this man, was his love for his mother! The gentle, high-born lady, worshipful of her son, how hard it was to lay her in the dust and silence of that old family tomb at Winchester—though sculptured figures of grief and tears kept watch above her; and proud armorial bearings were inscribed upon the senseless marble! So feeling thus, he sympathized with the brown-faced pauper-child, and he laid his hand over the bony hand of the girl, and his voice was gentle and kind in addressing her.

"My child, I had a mother once, but she is dead now; therefore, I pity all who have gone through the same trial! go out and gather all the flowers you desire, and when they wither, come for more!"

She caught his hand passionately to her lips, shed tears and kisses upon it—then without a word, flew out of the room.

"So ho! well, it seems I have made one heart happy, have I?" soliloquized Mr. Barrington, as the door closed after the retreating form. "I wonder what her name is! she loved her mother very dearly, it is evident. Why didn't I think to inquire her name?"

Mr. Barrington leaned out of the window, which overlooked the spacious garden, to see if the child was yet there, but she was hastening down the road with the two red blossoms in her hand; and too far away for him to address her. So he closed the window, returned to his writing, and for the time forgot the existence of the little pauper girl.

CHAPTER II.

"Lord John, what is a gift? It's a thing of gold And gems!"

"Ay, my friend, it may be, but far oftener 'Tis the humble offering of a simple heart."—Old Play.

"SOMETHING marked with your name, Mr. Barrington," said James, entering his master's chamber, about a week after his interview with the almshouse girl, bearing a rude, covered basket in his hand.

As the man went out, Mr. Barrington took up the bundle languidly, as a matter of duty rather than of inclination, but a glow of interest spread over his face as his eye fell upon the crumpled, unskilled letters written upon a dirty piece of paste-board attached to the handle of the basket:

"For Mr. Hugh Barrington—From Mabel Ward, the Pauper."

"The little elf who wanted the red chrysanthemums, or I'm very much mistaken!" said Mr. Barrington, to himself; "and so her name is Mabel—very like Isabel!" he added, fiercely—"well, well, a trace to these accursed memories! Let me see what the child has sent me!"

He drew off the cover of the basket, and there was disclosed to view a little speckled kitten, with white head and feet. Mr. Barrington smiled.

"Ah, ha! an addition to my menagerie, it seems; well, it is certainly pleasant to be thus remembered. I wonder if I am to throw the animal into the lake, or keep it to preside over my establishment?"

Mr. Barrington went back to his chair by the window, and was soon lost in the pages of a mythological work, while the kitten left to herself, made sundry gyrations, and performed a score of somersets amid the heap of newspapers which covered the centre-table. The gentleman was aroused from his book by the noise of tearing paper, and to a recollection of his new companion.

"So, I suppose I must send the girl something in return for her munificent request! What shall it be? A rag baby, or a plum cake? An embryo of all the rest of her sex, probably; fond of nothing substantial! I'll send for her, and ask her what she'd like—it'll help time along if nothing more."

He touched the bell-cord, and in a few minutes his favorite servant, James, entered.

"Who brought that basket here?" pointing to the one on the floor.

"One of the poorhouse children, the one who asked for flowers, a few days ago."

"Could you identify her among the others in that den? Or stay, here is her name, Mabel Ward!"

"Sir, I could tell her among a thousand!"

"Very well, then; go over there and tell her Mr. Barrington wishes to see her at the Priory, immediately."

"Ha, ha!" laughed Mr. Barrington with scornful bitterness, as the messenger left him. "Quite a novelty for Hugh Barrington to take an interest in anybody! So long since he has done such a thing that the sensation is decidedly new. Well, mine is not the only life blasted to waste by woman's falseness."

The little kitten heard his voice, came up to his side, and sprang purring to his knees, her large intelligent eyes fixed upon his face, as though she would read the character of her future master. Mr. Barrington placed his hand caressingly on her head—not from a spontaneous impulse, but as something forced from him by circumstances—and the animal, as if satisfied, put her jaws over her nose, in true feline fashion, and settled down to sleep.

By-and-by, when Mr. Barrington had become enmeshed with waiting, the door opened to admit the little pauper. She looked dim and frightened at coming into the gentleman's presence, and remained standing upon the threshold, as though on the point of making her escape from the place.

"Well, child, don't be frightened to death. I'm not a bear to devour you! come forward."

The girl advanced; the kitten heard her step, nuzzled up, and at sight of Mabel, sprang into her arms, with a low peculiar cry of gladness. The little girl pressed her wilful pet to her bosom, and almost devoured it with kisses.

Mr. Barrington looked on, half-amused, half-annoyed.

"Humph! so you love the kitten, do you?"

[SHE ENJOYING.]

"Yes, sir."

"Then why did you bring it here to me?"

Mabel hesitated; Barrington frowned.

"Why? come, I am used to receiving answers to my questions."

"Because, sir, the mistress at the home bent it, and set out to down it, and I loved it and didn't want it to be hurt! Then I wanted to give you something for the red flowers, and I hadn't anything but poor Mabel! I thought, maybe, you'd love her, after you'd seen how good she is."

"Humph! I'd look well petting a cat, wouldn't I?"

Mr. Barrington's voice was harsh, but the gleam of his laughing eye softened down to a more human-like expression.

"Yes, sir," returned the girl in answer.

"Who told you to reply?" he asked, shortly, irritated by Mabel's quiet voice.

"Nobody, sir."

"Again! well, just like the sex—always after the last word—my girl, is your name Mabel Ward?"

"Yes, sir."

"How old are you, Mabel?"

"Thirteen, last January."

"Who are you?"

"Mrs. Brown says I am a trollop."

"Ah, yes, I beg your pardon for asking; you informed me of that fact at a previous interview. Who was your father? and your mother?"

"My father I never saw, he went away somewhere, mama said; my mama was the prettiest creature I with the bluest eyes, and the goldenest hair! O, how I did love her! We lived in a nice house once, sir; almost as nice as yours, but we had to go away from there, and then we went into a great city and mama sewed till she got paler and whiter than the new snow. After while we moved to Cheshire, down a cross, in that then mama was took sick, and men came about 12 day and carried us both to the poorhouse! She died there—my poor, dear, darling mama! O, if she had only lived!"

The girl buried her face in her hands, and sobbed bitterly.

Mr. Barrington kept silence for a moment; then he said, abruptly:

"What do you like?"

She looked up surprised, but answered him instantly.

"I like flowers, birds, books, blue skies, and green trees—but I like something else a great deal better!"

"Do you? indeed! Well, what is it?"

"I'm afraid to tell you, sir, for Mrs. Brown says it's an awful bad liking to have, and I musn't think of it!"

"No matter what Mrs. Brown says, tell me what it is!"

"Well, then, sir, I think I like story books the best of anything."

"Story books, eh? well, who learned you to read them?"

"My mother first, and afterwards my governess—that was when we lived in the nice house, and my mother wore shining stones in her brown hair. Since then, I've spelled out a good many hard words all by myself."

Mr. Barrington was interested. The cold, haughty man who had retired from a title, and a handsome house in London, to an obscure country residence to get rid of female society, was actually interested in an elfish-looking girl—an inmate of the shire poorhouse! For the first time in four years had something out of himself and his perplexities claimed his attention in such a manner as to secure it. The sensation was new enough to be agreeable. He took a few moments to think. Afterwards he spoke aloud, more to himself than to his patient auditor.

"Why not? To be sure it's an absurd thing, but it's my fancy to try it! The Priory is large enough for a score more than it shelters, and Mrs. Harris, the housekeeper, can take her wardrobe in hand."

Then turning to Mabel, he said:

"How would it please you to come here and live with me?"

"Very much indeed, sir!"

"Would you be willing to study hard, such studies as I should consider necessary for a young lady? Would you put up with my fierce temper? my sulky mood? my oftentimes, perhaps, decided and harsh displeasure? Would you, in short, be willing to risk the peril of a life with such a man as people call me, for the advantage you might receive?"

He spoke as he might have done to one of his equal in years and experience, and the girl replied in the same manner.

"I would risk it!"

"It is settled, then. Consider this your home, where you can do as you choose, except when I bid you otherwise. By-and-by, when I have talked it over with my housekeeper, you shall have your own room. Now, go into the library, and you can amuse yourself with the portfolios of engravings there, until I return! Does that suit you?"

"Yes, sir, but may I—please may I take my—your kitten with me?"

"To be sure; the kitten is yours now, to do with as you like."

Mr. Barrington showed the girl to the library, and closing the door upon her, went down stairs to confer with his housekeeper.

CHAPTER III.

No, in my corner let me dream;
The world on joy supplies;
Forth from your pillow—may good friends,
A weary convict die;
And through the doorway that I trace
I fly as free as Beaulieu's race,
Here in my little corner blest,
For pity's sake, I beg, let me rest!—*Eranger.*

Mrs. HARRIS was greatly surprised at the sudden "freak" of her master, but she offered no disclaimer; for at Glenton Priory Hugh Barrington's slightest wish was law. Therefore, the obedient housekeeper made every arrangement for Mabel Ward's convenience and comfort, with cheerfulness; while Mr. Barrington rode hurriedly over to the shire authorities, and received formal permission to assume the guardianship of the girl.

In a space of time incredibly short for the contemplation of an American housewife, everything was prepared—clothes suitable for her age, neat and clean from the Sunday "rig" of the housekeeper's eldest daughter; and an apartment tastefully furnished, overlooking the Priory gardens.

Mr. Barrington superintended the arrangements with the air of one who having once made up his mind is determined to proceed, whatever obstacles and difficulties may stand in his way.

And so Mabel Ward was installed in her new home; and very grateful was the heart which in earnest prayer that night, asked God to rest his choicest blessings upon the head of Hugh Barrington. The following day, Mabel was summoned to the library, where Mr. Barrington awaited her. He immediately proceeded to mark out the course of study which he designed her to pursue; rigid, severe and abstruse, it was—like himself. He explained it all patiently and clearly to the willing yet wondering mind of the girl; and was gratified to observe that she at once set about learning the tasks he had prescribed for the first lessons.

Mabel studied hard through all those dark, cheerless November days, and in the sallow light of winter hours, for she wished to please her singular guardian; and her soul rejoiced in the treasures of knowledge thus unexpectedly opened before her. She grew to regard her studies with a love akin to adoration—to reach out yearningly for more from the hidden heap of wisdom—to stir the waters to the lower depths, and to look below the surface for pearls and secret gems!

Her progress was rapid—her soul was in the work, and she had an able and faithful—if sometimes harsh—instructor. Mr. Barrington seemed to take a sort of negative pride in the advancement of his pupil, and though he never expressed his application, she felt that he was satisfied with her endeavors.

Mabel felt, almost unconsciously, into the habit of waiting on her guardian; anticipating his wishes, and gratifying them before his servants could be made to understand. She cheered his solitude, when he would admit her to his presence, by her sweet voice reading to him some quaint, glowing book of Oriental imagery, in which he took a strange delight; or singing to him the simple English ballads which she had learned from strolling musicians.

A year and a half flitted by, and found Mabel a better scholar in the classics than can often be found among apt boarding-school graduates. She understood the substantial, useful branches of study clearly and thoroughly, and displayed no little taste in drawing.

Mr. Barrington engaged a music teacher, but strictly forbade his teaching her dancing, as he proposed. French was also prohibited—Mr. Barrington arguing that both dancing and the study of the French language only added to the natural frivolity of the sex, and Mabel should not feel the contaminating influence. And Mabel, ever ready to abide by his opinion, acquiesced.

In the meantime, just as Mr. Barrington was making preparations for a week's fishing and hunting on a Welsh domain which belonged to his patrimony, letters came down from London, from his married sister, Lady Helen Wortley, urging him to wait upon her without delay, at her mansion near town, to assist at the coming nuptials of their younger sister, Miss Adela Barrington.

Lady Helen pressed him to come, if not from brotherly regard, to save the comments of vulgar people—and threatened in case of his non-appearance at the time she mentioned, to inflict upon him a fitting punishment for his remissness. She would come up to Glenton Priory, accompanied by the entire bridal suite, and she would take care that the ladies should all come prepared for a summer's sojourn, as well as for a siege upon his bachelor heart. Besides, she said, his presence at the marriage, and signature to the settlements, was legally necessary; Adela had a right to expect him; Lord Haviland was anxious to renew his old acquaintance with the only brother of his *fiancée*—in short, he must for once, at least, renounce his solitude and confer the honor of his presence upon Landsdowne, the seat of her ladyship.

Mr. Barrington was annoyed. When he had given his consent to the marriage of Adela with Lord Haviland, whom he highly esteemed, he had thought the matter ended, so far as he was concerned; and with his averseness to society, it was peculiarly unpleasant to be thus forcibly dragged into the gaiety of a bridal, and its attendant festivities.

But Mr. Barrington loved his sisters very tenderly, though being naturally of an undemonstrative disposition, he had probably never told them so; but his care, and attention to their interest and happiness, until they each selected other protectors, had been the topic of universal remark. He read the letters over carefully, that of his younger sister twice—and then laying them down, he shrugged his shoulders with a little gesture of vexation.

"Humph! to have to have a well-order'd rooms turned topsy-turvy by a troop of giggling girls; my library privacy invaded; my cherished books and pictures turned over by rude hands—bah! the very idea is frightful!"

And so, after a little consideration, Mr. Barrington decided that it was better of two evils to choose the lesser; and accordingly, he returned a note of acceptance to his fair sisters' invitation.

That evening, when Mons. Quaverly, the music master, had departed, and Mabel was sitting alone before the great old-fashioned piano, Mr. Barrington came into the room to say that she might gather, and arrange a couple of bouquets from the conservatory; as he would be off to London on the morrow, and would like them to take to his sisters.

Mabel started, and blushed, then paled; and eventually replied, as she always did to everything this man said:

"Yes, sir."

"And while I am gone, Mabel, if I shouldn't see you again before I set out—just remember I'll be pleased to hear from you; write me all the particulars of everything, and let me know if your music interests you as much as you have fancied it would. Don't forget, you'll recollect, wont you?"

"Yes, sir."

"That's my good little girl, and the bouquets, too; mine to-morrow, will be time enough."

And with a lighter step than had marked Mr. Barrington for many a day, he went up to his chamber, to make preparations for his journey. In truth, the letters of his sisters had roused him a little from the lassitude which had so long overpowered him, and by the time he had made his arrangements for London, he felt almost glad that the bridal of his sister called him for a time from his seclusion.

CHAPTER IV.

"I saw two clouds at morning
Fringed with the rising sun,
And in the noon they floated on,
And flooded into one."

Born Lady Helen, and Miss Adela, were surprised and delighted on receiving Mr. Barrington's letter accepting their invitation, and which preceded his arrival only a few hours.

It was exceedingly pleasant to anticipate seeing Hugh once more in society, after so long an absence from their circle; and Lady Helen prided herself not a little on her tact in winning his consent to be present at the wedding. Her brother, though accounted by all his acquaintances in London as an uncommonly reserved, not to say odd, person, was handsome; intelligent in no ordinary degree; and besides, he was righteously Lord Beresford; that being his deceased father's title. But his son, after his return from an Eastern tour, had refused to mingle with society, even that of his intimate friends, and at length his singularity of conduct ceased to be the unfailing theme of remark in the high circles in which he had moved.

So it was very pleasant to his genteel, high-bred sisters—the prospect of again seeing him in the sphere where his birth and fortune naturally placed him; and Miss Adela, enamored at the exquisitely furnished morning-room, where she perused his letter, like a very child.

"O, Helen," she exclaimed, "to think that the marriage of his willful little sister was enough to call him from that hateful Priory! And, of course, he will be one of the groomsmen, now; somebody else shall give the bride away; you see I want to have him and Lady Gertrude Athol stand up together. Won't they make a splendid couple? Lady Gertrude with her proud queenly beauty, and our dear Hugh with his noble figure and fine, expressive face? Lady Gertrude has decidedly an air of royalty!"

"True, sister; but has it not been arranged for Captain Rainsford to be her partner? Besides, it will be more *tonish* for your brother to give away the bride. Don't you think so, Adela?"

"O, I don't know about that! Lady Alice Beaumont, you know, was given away by her father's lawyer, and the Beaumonts are very *distingue* people. But as for Captain Rainsford, he won't object, I know, to having Matilda Sinclair instead of Lady Gertrude. The Sinclair family is rich!"

"Nonsense, Adela! What does Captain Rainsford care for wealth?"

"Not so much for wealth as for refinement, I imagine; you will admit, that in spite of her pretensions, Miss Sinclair is *gauche*. Besides, the Sinclairs are *parvenues*!"

"Fie! my little Adela placing awkwardness in the scale against wealth. Why, I should almost think that Hugh himself was here! But here comes Lucille; smooth down your curls, Adela, for I know by the demure expression of her little French face that my lord awaits."

"Well, then, sister mine, while I am making my toilet, please go and inform my stately *fiancee* that his future brother-in-law will honor our nuptials with his presence."

And with a graceful little courtesy to her sister, Adela went up stairs to her chamber.

Lady Helen looked after her with a glow of admiration suffusing her face. And no wonder; for Adela Barrington was beautiful, amiable, and good-hearted, although a little spoiled by flattery. Lady Helen had herself been the *belle* of London society previous to her marriage with Lord Wortley, a middle-aged gentleman who indulged serious scruples of conscience against married life. Deprived of the privilege of claiming admiration for herself, it was very pleasant to see her portion of admiration bestowed upon Adela; and Lady Helen felt very grateful that her sister had been thus liberally endowed by nature.

Both the sisters of Hugh Barrington were beautiful, but it was altogether in a different style. Lady Helen was tall, elegant and stately; with heavy braids of black hair, crowning a brow lofty as well as expansive; a complexion fair and pure as the finest marble; small, aristocratic features, and hands and feet exquisitely modelled.

Adela, on the contrary, was small and slight; blue-eyed and golden-haired; with lips like ripe

cherries, and cheeks which had caught the rich hue of blush roses; a smile that continually broke the sunshine of her face into ripples of light, and reminded one of the shadow of a golden butterfly falling over a bed of pink blossoms.

People said it was singular that Lord Henry Haviland with all his pride and haughtiness, should have chosen Adela Barrington, light and coquettish as she was believed to be, from all others, to preside over his magnificent establishment; and these same "people" did not know of the warm corner in his heart where love, deep and pure, had made herself an abiding-place.

In due time, Mr. Barrington arrived at Landsdowne, and as might be expected his advent was hailed with great pleasure by all; each one manifested his and her interest in their own peculiar way. Lord Wortley, who was an inveterate sportsman, inquired the facilities of Glenton swamps for snipe shooting. Lord Haviland greeted his old friend with a formal courtesy, which but ill-concealed the warm regard, which in spite of him burnt in his eyes. Lady Helen kissed his forehead, and called him dear Hugh. But Adela flung herself into his arm, and covered him with caresses.

Mr. Barrington was affected by the *empressment* of his younger sister, for Adela had been always his pet and favorite; so he kissed her very tenderly, almost reverently, and then led her over to Lord Haviland.

"May God bless you, my sister! and may you never know what it is to have a single hope blighted!"

Then, putting away all this unwonted emotion, he entered into conversation with the gentlemen, upon indifferent topics, and the old look of gloom and misanthropy came back and settled down upon his face.

The twenty-ninth of June the marriage of Lord Haviland and Adela took place; and a gay, fashionable affair it was. There was a long train of groomsmen and bridesmaids, a splendidly dressed cortege of guests and carriages; but Adela's pet project failed. Mr. Barrington positively refused to act as groomsmen; he was Adela's only surviving male relative, and he claimed a father's right. Therefore, Captain Rainsford, of Her Britannic Majesty's service, was enabled to run himself in the smiles of Lady Gertrude.

The wedding festivities over, the party settled down for a quiet week at Landsdowne; previous to going (by Hugh's invitation) to Glenton Priory, to pass the months of August and September. Lady Gertrude Athol was of the party, also Captain Rainsford, Sir Charles Martyn, Miss Sinclair, and Miss Corban; the latter a particular friend of Miss Sinclair.

Lady Gertrude was a proud, beautiful woman, long set down as inaccessible to the admiration of any common man; a high-bred coquette, who played with hearts as she played a game of chess—*scientifically*; and whose greatest ambition was to have all the noblemen in her circle sighing for her. "His woman was singularly fascinated with the appearance of Mr. Barrington. There was a spice of romance in her character; and the air of mystery which hung around him, his choice in leaving society, renouncing a title for the plain family name of Barrington, and retiring to an out-of-the-way rural retreat like Glenton Priory, all this wrought upon her imagination; while his polished address, his irreproachable character, and maybe his great wealth, so influenced her prudential motives as to create in her a strong desire for a better acquaintance with the somewhat taciturn brother of her "dear friend," Lady Wortley.

Mr. Barrington seemed to be blissfully unconscious of the many skillful little manoeuvres by which she sought to secure his attendance at her side when the party rode or walked; and he generally rendered futile all her gracious smiles and "flutterings" by a cool, pre-occupied bow, and a moving away to join Lady Haviland. In fact, he had been so long out of society that he had outgrown, as it were, all those chivalrous attentions which are so grateful to any lady when coming from one she loves. As it was, Mr. Barrington's conduct *piqued* Lady Gertrude's pride, and only increased her longing to bring the handsome but haughty gentleman to her feet.

Lady Haviland often expostulated, in a playful way, with her brother, for his studied coolness towards Lady Gertrude, and only once did Hugh towards a reply. Then, he said:

"Adela, I am not professing a lady's man, neither do I wish to be; I am well satisfied with winning no woman's smile, and making no woman's heart throb quicker. I have no love to bestow, why should I be selfish enough to ask that for which I can give no recompense?"

And so the subject dropped for the time.

CHAPTER V.

"We seek too high for things close by,
And lose what nature found us;
For life hath here no charm so dear,
As home and friends around us."

And how fared little Mabel during the absence of Mr. Barrington? Lonely enough was she in the great old house—she missed even his slow, steady step upon the stairways; his presence in the library, and in the garden, and his invariable: "Good morning, Mabel," when she came down to the breakfast-room of a morning.

She learned all her lessons perfectly, as though he had been there to listen to her recitations; and practised her music an hour longer each day than he had said, so fearful was she that her progress might fail to satisfy his exactions.

At length, a letter arrived from Mr. Barrington to the steward, announcing the intended coming of the bridal party for a summer sojourn at Glenton Priory, that day forthright! The epistle was filled with orders and instructions, touching the preparations necessary to be made for the reception of the guests; but on a blank corner, there was a closely-written postscript, which ran thus:

"Tell Mabel that I am hoping she has not neglected her studies, as she will perhaps have a month's 'holiday' during the stay of my sisters, and their party. Ask her to do me the favor of arranging the flower-vases in the ladies' chambers, she has so perfect a taste!"

This remembrance, little though it was, gratified the girl beyond measure, and with a light heart she went through with her studies for the day, holding her pet Milly, now grown to quite a demure old cat, lying quietly napping in her lap.

An important era had dawned upon the existence of the Priory servants. Such an event had not occurred since the birth of Lady Adela. Such an opening and airing of long closed rooms, such "flirting" among the curtains, beds and carpets—the coming and going of the upholsterers, the opening of hamper of rare old wine, long used to the cobwebs and dust of the Priory cellars—and the grand brightening and putting in order of everything, from the great wainscoted drawing-room, to the very horses in the stables.

The day which Mr. Barrington had named as the one which would probably, ere its close, find himself and his friends at the Priory, dawned at last. Bright, beautiful, and cloudless—serene as only mid-summer days can be—with a golden glow in the pulseless air, and a thread of sweet, peaceful dreams in the breath of the drowsy boughs. In short, such a day as we all welcome with a tender yearning in our souls to clasp inward more of its grand beauty to cheer our melancholy in years to come.

At an early hour, Mabel went through the various apartments of the Priory, noting with pleased surprise the transfiguration of everything. Hitherto, the great shadowy parlors had been to her imagination haunts of mystery and gloom, and she had well-loved to stray within their sombre precincts at the hour of sunset, and flinging herself down on some old carved chair which had been generations in the family, indulge in those half-sad, half-happy dreams, which from her childhood up had hovered upon the horizon of her life.

Now, all was changed; new carpets—piles of Sicilian roses—took the place of the sober crimson matting which had been the pride of the Barrington family for scores of years; modern sofas and *fauvel* usurped the straight-backed lounges and heavy oaken chairs of another century, and over the quaint high windows were curtains light and fashionable as those which draped the plate glass "lights" of Lady Helen's house in London.

Noting these alterations, Mabel was unconscious of time, and the tolling of the hall clock the hour of twelve, simultaneously with the rumbling of wheels, in the park, aroused her. She cast a hasty glance from the windows to see the courtyard filled with post-horses, and travelling-carriages, bearing on their mud-dashed panels the arms and bearings of noble families; then, she hurried up to her chamber, to prepare for the expected summons to the parlors.

For some reason her heart felt very heavy, and twice she caught herself wishing that Mr. Barrington had not brought company home with him. A dark presentiment of coming evil swept its wings over her, and she wondered why she, who so highly regarded Mr. Barrington, should be averse to meeting with his sisters. She remembered of having read tales of orphan girls, scorned by the wealthy for their poverty; and treated with contempt because they had not gold with which to purchase favor. And perhaps this might be her fate—nothing was more probable, and in the midst of her unhappy meditations, the woman, who had been depicted by Mr. Barrington to wait on her, came in to say that "Miss Mabel's presence was required in the drawing-room. Would Miss Mabel need any assistance in dressing?"

"No, Mabel wished none, and having dismissed the girl, she attired herself in a simple white muslin dress, with no ornament except the clustering curls of glossy brown hair, in which were woven a few graceful buds of the valley rose. She looked very lovely in her modest hesitation as she stopped at the door of the great room where the guests were assembled. A look of surprise flashed over the faces of the ladies—admiration seized the gentlemen, and Mr. Barrington, perceiving Mabel, arose hastily from a *tee-dee* with Lady Gertrude, and came forward to meet her with extended hands.

"And how has my little Mabel fared these weeks of my absence?" he asked her, as he was leading her down the apartment.

"Well, saving your good presence, Mr. Barrington!"

"Ah, then you missed me, Mabel? agreeable for me to hear, but not thus for you to endure."

They had arrived at the sofa where the gentleman's sisters were seated—Mr. Barrington presented his companion as if she had been their equal in birth and station, as she was in beauty and grace.

"My sisters, allow me to present my adopted child—Mabel Ward—Mabel, Lady Wortley; Lady Haviland."

Lady Wortley bowed with cold dignity, but Lady Haviland impulsively sprang up and kissed the blushing cheek of Mabel, giving her hand a little assuring squeeze at the same time. The gentlemen greeted her respectfully, as was due from them to the ward of their host; and the other ladies of the party twined their fans, and cast meaning glances at each other from behind their costly trifles of sandal-wood.

The guests were nine in number; Lord and Lady Wortley; Lord and Lady Haviland; Lady Gertrude Athol; Miss Matilda Sinclair; Miss Josephine Corban; Sir Charles Martyn, and Captain Rainsford.

Mabel was seated at the table, between Lady Haviland, and Captain Rainsford, but she was little, and seemed to labor under a painful embarrassment throughout the meal. So soon as the wine was brought on, she excused herself, and went up to her chamber, on the plea of lessons to study, but in reality to escape the cold looks of the high-born ladies, who were pleased to bestow upon her a supercilious stare when she ventured a reply to the courteous remarks of Captain Rainsford.

Poor little Mabel! it was her first experience of the flattering attention (!) which rich people inflict upon their inferiors in worldly possessions!

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

MARTIN SOUTHGATE AND HIS HOPE.

BY FRANK LEE BENEDICT.

I WONDER if the people who read novels and grow sentimental over poetry, ever think how all these things are written. I believe the general impression is that books are concocted for the pleasure of writing them; that the authors thereof are a visionary race who have no real trouble, make no actual exertion in producing their works, and that, on the whole, it is as pleasurable an occupation as reading the pages and as easy as *criticizing* them.

I wish devoutly that the persons who talk about the happiness of a literary life might try it. I should like the young ladies, fresh from the inspiration of boarding-school studies, who write broken-hearted sonnets on superfine note paper, tied together with blue ribbons, and sent for publication—"not for the purpose of coining gold, but to obtain that for which the imaginative nature pines, spirit-sympathy and heart-companionship"—to see the women who have really made writing a business. I think that the three babies squalling at once, the complaining husband who always tears off his shirt buttons and grumbles incessantly at his wife, though he does not hesitate to live upon her earnings, might possibly cure them of their heaven-soaring dreams; convince their delicate sensibilities that insano folly is no proof of genius, that nervousness and irritability are not poetry, and that, on the whole, they had better settle down into what the Lord intended them for—tolerably sensible girls, and reasonably obedient daughters.

Martin Southgate was a literary man, in the fullest and dreariest meaning of the term, for his pen was his only means of obtaining a subsistence, and he lived, or rather did not exactly starve, upon its earnings.

He was a young man still, not more than thirty, and for ten dreary years he had followed that course of drudgery, more wearing to body and soul than the rounds of a tread-mill!

Life had not begun thus with him. At eighteen he had been an impulsive, imaginative boy, with a perfect treasury of hopes and dreams, and running through the whole, a vein of poetical genius, which, under kindlier auspices, might have yielded a product of pure golden ore. He had not been brought up to

any regular business, nor could he be induced to study a profession. His father was a man possessed of wealth, and a large family of sons and daughters had been reared in the idle, expensive manner which characterizes the bringing up of children in these latter days of our republic.

Martin had gone through college after a fashion, attaining honors, not so much from hard labor as from the ease with which he mastered any study which pleased him. Languages he liked, and consequently excelled in them; but as for mathematics, I seriously doubt if he could have gone through the multiplication table without halting, although he managed to pass very creditable examinations, thanks to the loose sleeves of his college robe, which concealed the problems hieroglyphed on the wristbands of his shirts.

He began his university course at fourteen—nothing unusual in this land of precocious genius—and at seventeen he left before the term for graduating. Then came the trip to Europe, indispensable now-a-days to the completion of any young man's education, and Martin made all the progress which could have been expected, from the precocity of his intellect, and the perseverance which characterized him in any favorite pursuit, especially pleasure.

He learned to speak French with ease and grace, and Mademoiselle Zephyrine, of the Grand Opera, sported an unusual amount of rich jewelry. I do not account for the coincidence; there is no reason why I should grow scandalous as well as garrulous in my declining years. Martin made the grand tour in the most approved style, and the delightful air of Florence and Naples improved his complexion as much as their society benefited his morals—no, manners!

But, after all, there was something better in the youth than in most of his associates. There were intervals when he tore himself from the dissipated world around, and really benefited heart and soul by his wanderings amid those regions of the past. He read and wrote a great deal, and his poems were praised to his heart's content, and in some solitary moments he felt that God had given him powers that ought not

to be frittered away in the aimless existence which he was leading.

An unexpected summons brought him back to America: his father had died suddenly, and he was forced to hurry home. I was wrong to use the word, for he no longer had one. Like many men reputed wealthy, Mr. Southgate had for years lived beyond his income, and indulged in speculations, which, after his death, showed him to be a ruined man.

A trifle was saved from the wreck for the wife and younger children; but Martin was only a step-son, and cordially reciprocated his second mother's dislikes, so he allowed her to take what there was, and the two parted: she seeking a home with her relatives in the South; and Martin setting out in the world for himself.

There is a volume of meaning in that phrase! To the young, full of bright anticipation; to the old and successful, a feeling of triumph at the dangers passed, of heart-ache at the hopes and feelings left behind; and to those struggling on through the darkness, replete with mockery and pain.

So Martin set out in the world; not for a moment sinking down, as many a youth, wearied like him, would have done, but determined to win for himself wealth and position. He adopted a literary career, of course, and, by way of commencement, prepared to publish a volume of poems.

He tried several publishers, but they scouted the idea. Some laughed in his face, and others treated him as a sort of lunatic; but this only roused Martin's obstinacy, and he determined to succeed in spite of them all. He found a man at last who was willing to take the poems, provided Southgate paid the expenses of getting them up, which he agreed to do, although it went hard with him to raise the necessary sum, and left him almost penniless when done. But the book was published. Martin had read the proof sheets, lingered lovingly over every line, and now he actually held in his hand a copy of his work, and on the table lay the newspaper containing the announcement of its publication.

That was the last advertisement Martin ever saw; for of course the publisher did nothing but print the book and pocket his money. Several papers noticed the poems favorably; then they fell dead, as many another such volume has done, and Martin was no nearer fame than before.

But one thing—before the winter was over he was dinnerless several times, and that is neither poetical nor pleasant. Something of course

must be done, but it seemed very difficult to find any way of doing it. He took poems to several of the literary journals, whose editors boasted of their fostering care of genius, and pointed to one and another rising stars at whose first glimmerings they had assisted. But the patrons of genius snubbed him and his creations, until Martin was ready to plunge the unlucky verses into the fire, and throw himself out of the window.

At last he found the editor of a new publication who was willing to treat with him, but not for poetry—the powers forefend! Of course, Martin hated prose, all newly fledged authorlings have a supreme contempt for it; but our young genius found himself obliged to curb the flight of his fancy, and come down to writing stories, essays, anything and everything that his employer pleased, and for such sums as he could get.

So he lived for a time, how, heaven knows, for I don't; though many an author, who is now famous, perhaps, might, and then the establishment burst and the periodical vanished into thin air, and Martin was destitute again. Luckily his Bohemian mode of life brought him into contact with all sorts of people, and he met a rising actress, who desired also to be considered a literary star, and she bought and actually paid—remarkable woman—for Martin's poetry, which she published under her own name, with unbounded applause; being an actress wise in her day and generation.

First one kind of employment, then another; at one time our hero served as a "Dramatic Critic" for a morning paper, and raced each evening from one theatre to another till midnight, wrote his article after, took it to the office before daylight, and all for the magnificent stipend of three dollars per week. Once I have heard it whispered that he employed his poetic genius in producing those stupendous rhymes which celebrate the wonders of cheap clothing stores—New Year's addresses were quite in his way, and he wrote periods and puffs of every earthly thing, from quack medicines to French sugar candies.

So he rose gradually—do not smile, romantic young lady, reading this sketch, when you ought to be sewing on your father's vest-buttons—do not turn away in disgust, Byronically miserable youth, counting your halting rhymes upon your useless fingers—I employ the term advisedly. This habit of writing anything and all things, throwing them off at a moment's notice, yet giving them a finished look, taught him a force and ease which it would have taken him years

to acquire in any other way, together with a grace in which amateur compositions are usually sadly wanting.

Before his strength and youthful vigor were worn out, and all his early dreams crushed, there came a change. Martin found a young clergyman, with many enthusiastic female admirers, for he was angelic in his surplice, and our poet supplied the material which raised him to eminence. In truth, Martin succeeded admirably; the sermons were better than anything he had ever written, and the crowds of stricken souls who flocked to the church, gained an immense deal of consolation from the eloquent language of our young Bohemian, as delivered by their rector. Now the clergyman was not a bad man in his way, only very weak, and out of his large salary he paid Martin well, and introduced him to notice, so that he procured an engagement in a first-class magazine, and began to be favorably known as a writer.

Of course, about that time, he must commit an egregious folly—he married. I hold that a matrimonial appendage is only an added vexation to any young author, but when besides being a wife she is also a fool, the poor fellow, who is her other half, is badly enough off.

Now Martin's Eve was a fool of the very worst and most incurable class, for she had a trifle of brains at the bottom of her folly, and for such there is no more hope than for a woman attacked by an ism.

But the girl was very pretty, and Martin mistook a mere fancy for love, and so laid what he believed to be his heart at her feet, and she pleased with the verses he wrote her, flattered by the newspaper notices he received, accepted his hand, when he offered it, for the very reason that nine-tenths of the young ladies marry, because she was asked, and because in feminine creed matrimony is the aim and end of woman's destiny.

So those two were married! The gilding wore off the chain of life as quickly as off pinchback jewelry, and left bare the galling links which each must drag on as best they could. After a little they kept house, for Martin wished to have a home, and he had it, such as it was. His wife knew as much of household duties as a camelia does of a vegetable garden, so the young husband went through that pleasant torture—life in an ill-regulated family.

Bessie fretted, and moaned, and dawdled about, and Martin did the best he could, as far as providing for the house went, but by the time they had been married a twelvemonth he was seldom in it, and there was every probability of

his sinking to the level of so many of his profession.

But there came an angel into that wretched house—a little daughter was born to them, and in the baby-delight he felt, Martin Southgate was for a season like another man.

He called her Hope—she was indeed the last one whereto his heart could cling! He tended her, cared for her, and Bessie did as well as her helpless nature would permit. Two years after, another girl was given to them, but she was never the same to Martin Southgate's heart. She was like her mother, and was her pet, so they all went on as well as could be expected.

To think of providing for his little family with the proceeds of story writing, would have been about as practicable as feeding strong men on rose-leaves, so with another pang, Martin yielded up his last dream. He had forsaken poetry long before, but it was very hard to let go the final link that connected him with the beautiful imaginings of the past.

But in spite of his follies and weaknesses—not as intolerable as those of most of his profession—he put his romances in the fire, and went boldly to work as assistant editor of a daily paper. If any of my readers wish to know how a soul in purgatory looks, let them seek out the working editor of a daily newspaper who was once a man of refined and poetical mind!

But Martin drudged and supported the helpless ones depending upon him, as well as he could, and so the seasons drifted slowly on, and bore him away from his youth.

Hope was eight years old on her father's thirtieth birth-day, a pale, clear-eyed child, not pretty like little Bessie, but infinitely more interesting with her quaint, womanly ways and original speeches.

"Haven't you worked enough for to-night, papa?" she whispered, from her little stool at his feet, as he paused for a moment in his task.

"I have never worked enough, little one," he replied, drearily.

"But just to-night, you know!"

"For my Hope's birth-day—it ought to be a time of rest to be sure."

"But it is your's too—we ought to keep it, oughtn't we, mamma?"

"Nothing is ever done in this house that ought to be," she replied, fretfully, leaning back in her chair, already a jaded, peevish looking woman, with scarcely a trace of good looks left. "I am sure nobody would think of my birth-day if I lived a hundred years."

"Oh, yes, indeed, mamma, you know I remembered it last time, and I have papa's, too!"

She laid her little gift on the table—only a pen-wiper, but so prettily and fancifully put together, that it was quite a study.

"And it is part Bessie's, too," said Hope, when her father kissed and thanked her; "she couldn't help me much, but she did her best."

So Bessie was kissed also, and Hope whispered her father to kiss mamma likewise, and he obeyed—but there was no longer passion in those caresses—either of them might as well have flattened their noses against the mantle-piece!

"And now we will have a nice good evening," said Hope, when she deluded her father away from his work, and had arranged everything as neatly as possible.

"Papa," asked Bessie, "why is Hope's birthday the same as yours?"

"Because she was born on the same day, my dear," said her father.

"Well, then she ought to be as old—I can't understand it at all."

"It's so funny," said Hope, laughing gleefully, "I tried my best to explain it. But, oh! papa, wouldn't it be nice if we had been twins?"

Both the children laughed heartily, and so did Martin, at the ludicrous idea.

"Hope, you make my headache," said Mrs. Southgate, peevishly; "nobody has any pity on my neuralgia."

The child was quiet in an instant, but her father drew her on to his knee and whispered, "You are something better—you are my little, Hope!"

"I wish you would pay some attention to what I am saying," grumbled his wife. "We want some coal, and the man won't send any because his last bill isn't paid."

"I'll attend to it to-morrow," he replied.

"Oh! yes, mamma," cried both the children, "to-morrow."

"That is always the way I am put off, I shan't be allowed to speak next!"

Hope patted her father's hand gently, to keep down the impatience she saw struggling over his face.

"Papa," said Bessie, "mamma wants money to buy me a doll."

"Oh! Bessie," said Hope, "you said you wouldn't!"

"Well, I want it," whimpered the child, "any how."

"When I can get the money you shall have it—don't tease papa."

"I am sure you bought Hope a pot of violets,"

said Mrs. Southgate, "you can always find money for her."

"The violets only cost a shilling," replied Martin; "a boy brought them into the office, and said he was hungry, so I remembered my Hope, and took them."

Hope had shrunk into herself at her mother's words; but when her father spoke she crept closer to him, and turned away her head to hide the tears that would come.

"Well, I must have some money," said the wife, "I can't go on this way."

"And I can't give you money when I haven't it!"

"It's always so—I expected it," she whined.

"I am sure we spend enough to live comfortably, yet, somehow, we are always in debt! I daren't go to the corner on account of that infernal shoe man; and, in the middle of the next block, that butcher prowls about for one—upon my life, it's enough to drive a man mad!"

"That's the way you always go on, when I speak, fretting at me as if it was my fault! I do the best I can! I'm sure, I never expected to live in a house with only one servant! I might as well be dead and buried, nobody visits me—my own relations are ashamed of me, and no wonder, such a figure as I am!"

"Oh! mamma," said Hope, "when you have that pretty new dress, papa gave you on Christmas!"

"And that is the way I am thanked for sitting up two nights, to earn the money," exclaimed Martin, bitterly.

"Please don't, papa," whispered Hope, and the keen suffering in her eyes again checked his anger.

"And you know, mamma," put in Bessie, "that on New Year's day that great author paid you so many compliments—and me, too, but he didn't say anything about Hope, though."

"Dear little pet!" exclaimed the mother, kissing the pert little monkey; but she was fairly started on the subject of her grievances, and nothing could stop her.

"I am sure nobody who saw me when I was married would know me now! Aunt Mary told me what would come of marrying a genius; she said I wouldn't have shoes to my feet, and I haven't! And just to punish me she died and left her money to cousin Amelia, who now she rides down Fifth avenue in her carriage, and don't know me——"

"Curse your aunt Mary, and her money!" exclaimed Southgate, violently, quite driven beside himself with nervous headache, and her complaints.

"Oh! oh! oh!" sobbed Mrs. Southgate, "that ever I should live to be treated in this way! (Sob—sob.) There never was anybody so wretched. I wi-wish I was d-dead along with my blessed aunt!" and she burst into a torrent of passionate grief.

"Why, mamma," said Bessie, "it's only yesterday you called her a horrid old thing!"

"So she was," exclaimed her mother, with the ready change of feeling characteristic of hysterics, "to go and serve me so, and I deserved it all!"

"You will drive me mad!" cried Martin. "I haven't slept for two nights, and I cannot stand this."

"Nor I either. I never sleep! I am dying by inches! I wish I was dead! I wish I never had married! Oh! oh!"

"I wish to heaven you never had!" cried Southgate, flinging toward the door. "You have been the curse of my life!"

"Oh! mamma, papa!" pleaded Hope, not weeping, but shivering and white. "Not to-night—be kind to-night!"

But her angel counsel was unheeded, for Martin's passionate temper was fully roused. More violent words ensued; then he rushed out of the room, leaving Mrs. Southgate and Bessie shrieking in hysterical grief, and little Hope crouched upon the floor and calling vainly,

"Papa! oh! papa!"

In his passion, Martin Southgate never heard her cry, and he hurried from the house, as he had done only too often before, to drown his cares in the wine cup.

It was almost morning when he returned, reeling into the hall and droning out a drinking song. He reached the foot of the stairs, when a sight met his eyes that sent him backward like a sudden blow.

Upon the landing he saw his daughter Hope looking in his face, motionless as the ghost of his better nature sent to warn him. An old cloak of his own, in which she had been wrapped, had fallen at her feet when she started up, and there she stood, unable to speak or move, gazing into his face with a look of horror that he never forgot to his dying day.

The shock sobered him in an instant, and he remained transfixed with shame and agony.

"Hope!" he cried, at last, frightened by her paleness. "Hope! it is I! Speak to me! Don't look so!"

She flung herself into his arms, with a burst of tears that burned into his very heart.

"Oh! father, father, is it you? I thought it

was a bad spirit come to take us. Oh! papa, papa!"

Martin folded her to his heart, and sank down upon the steps with tears that seemed to wrench his life out.

"Don't cry, don't cry!" sobbed Hope. "Now I see it's you—I'm not afraid. Oh! don't cry, papa, don't!"

And there they sat and wept together, and in that hour the baleful impulses which had marred Martin Southgate's life fell from his soul never to return again.

"Please stop, papa!" pleaded Hope; and, knowing no other way to comfort him, she repeated a little prayer that she had learned, and, as Martin listened, his heart prayed likewise.

They knelt together, father and child—the angel of his life—and both rose up and stood there, calmed by the holy influence of those simple words.

"Mamma and Bessie are both in bed," whispered Hope, "don't wake them. I couldn't get to sleep, so I sat up. You aren't angry, are you, papa?"

"Angry, my little Hope! angry?" He lifted her in his arms again and kissed her. "My child, you have saved your father, never forget that. God will bless you, I cannot."

He carried her up to her room, and lay down on the bed beside her, and both fell asleep from excitement, Hope's head pillowed upon his bosom.

From that night there was a change in Martin Southgate's life. He never again treated Hope like a child, except in the exceeding fondness he showed her; but he counseled with her as he would have done with a woman, talked to her of his pursuits, his half-forgotten hopes that seemed farther than ever from realization; and Hope listened and understood.

She read every book that he put into her hands, and that which she did not comprehend he made clear, and in all their after life there was no shadow between their hearts, no thought or feeling that was not common with them, either through the medium of words or by the perfect sympathy between their natures.

There was a change in the house. Every day Hope took some new duty upon herself, and, whenever her growing cares detained her from school, her father taught her at night, and that was the pleasantest of all.

As Hope grew older, the force of her character had its effect upon her mother. Mrs. Southgate's health failed under the inert life she had led so long, but she grew less peevish and

exact, and there was at least a kind of peace in the dwelling, for Southgate never again allowed himself to speak harshly to his wife.

So the years kept on their way, and, amid the drudgery of his life, with all the best powers of his mind fettered and wasted upon that uncongenial labor, Martin found more peace from the pleasant influence growing up in his home than he had ever known before.

Hope was thirteen now, and little Bessie eleven. The whole management of the house fell upon Hope; and, for the first time in his experience of married life, Southgate saw something of order prevailing in his home. Hope seemed to learn things by instinct, the servant was perfectly devoted to her, and a new order of things was growing into vigorous life. She no longer went to school, for her mother needed much care; but she always found time for her books, and at night the tasks were repeated to her father.

It seemed impossible that there could be so little difference in the ages of the two girls. Bessie thought and acted like a spoiled child, vain of her floss silk curls, and happy with her doll; while Hope read books that most grown women would have rated too learned, and filled her soul with the inspired eloquence of the grand old bards.

One morning, Martin was a little more at leisure than usual, and he and Hope lingered over their quiet breakfast, Bessie taking hers by her mother's bedside.

"This is, indeed, a happy change," Southgate said, glancing round the tastefully arranged table; "there never was a man had so bright a Hope as mine."

But the little damsel's mind was full of weighty thoughts, and the moment her father's first cup of tea was disposed of, she began,

"I have been thinking of something, father, and I couldn't get to sleep last night for it."

"And what was that, my Hope?" Like every imaginative and affectionate person he had a world of pretty, fanciful names, but his daughter was always called "my Hope," and never, except with so much tenderness, almost veneration, that it was inexpressibly touching.

"Why do you never write any more stories, father?"

"I? Why I haven't done such a thing since you were a wee thing; I have forgotten how."

"Oh! no, I am sure you have not! And yesterday I found among your papers a half finished novel."

"I had quite forgotten the thing existed. Was it great trash, my Hope?"

"It was very, very beautiful! Father, I want you to finish it. You will have more time this spring. Will you do it for my sake?"

What would he have refused her? worn, tired man, in whose breast she had made sunlight all her brief life!

"We will read it over to-night, my Hope," he said, "and, if you approve, we will finish it."

The manuscript was read, and Southgate himself, coming after such a lapse of time to look at it with cool, critical judgment, was astonished at the freshness of thought and original management of the plot. He went to work upon it at once—not with any thought of fame or emolument—only to please his child, who sat by him as he worked, and read each page as he laid it aside.

The book was completed at last, and then all Southgate's interest in it was gone, and even Hope's solicitations could not induce him again to run the gauntlet of the publishers.

So Hope said no more, but she did not by any means put the matter aside in her mind. Not long after, a friend of her father called at the house, a man of high social and literary eminence, who was greatly attached to Hope, and remained for an hour's quiet chat, although Martin was absent.

"Mr. Bornley," said Hope, "I have a secret to tell you."

"By all means, my dear; nothing I like so much."

"Oh! but you must be very serious," she said, shaking her head sagely, "it is of the greatest importance."

"Grave as a Mussulman! What is it, Miss Hope?"

She went to a drawer and took out the manuscript, bringing it in her hands as carefully as some precious ornament.

"It's a novel, sir, that I want you to read; and do please to like it!"

"Have you turned blue stocking already?" he said, gravely. "Oh! I am sorry for that."

"My stockings are quite white, sir," replied Hope, in a way that made Bornley laugh heartily. "But look at the book, please."

He read a few pages here and there, occasionally interrupting himself with ejaculations of admiration and surprise; while Hope sat looking at him, trembling with pleasurable excitement.

"My father wrote it!" she exclaimed, at last, unable longer to control herself.

"The deuce he did! I always knew he could. And the man buries himself in a daily paper—why he ought to be trounced!"

Hope explained all Martin's hesitation.

"It shall be published, nevertheless," said Bornley. "Ten years ago I prophesied that your father would be a great man, and I'll not be disappointed. Give me that manuscript, and keep your own counsel for three days. Good night, Miss Hope."

Often in her after life, Hope wondered how she lived those three days; but outwardly she was calm enough, and, if human prayers ever availed, the supplications she offered up must have been heard.

The time passed, and, punctual to his appointment, Mr. Bornley made his appearance. Hope went into the room quiet, but pale as a ghost.

"Well, sir?" she gasped, "well?"

"It is well," he said; "my dear, your father's fortune is made."

Hope heard nothing more, her brain was reeling, and she felt blindly for a chair. When she came to herself, Mr. Bornley was carrying her to the window.

"I am well now," she said, "please let me get down, and tell me all about it."

He explained her as he would have a woman, and with the respect he would have shown to a queen.

"I took the book to Standish, and he was delighted with it—just now American novels are the rage. He will publish it at once, pay your father a large sum, and if as successful as we hope, will take another next year, of which Southgate can retain the copyright."

It was decided to say nothing to Martin at the time. Mr. Bornley signed the contract for him—and before even Hope had space to grow weary waiting, there came a great pile of proof sheets.

Hope went up to her father's study—he had one now—and knocked.

"Come in, my Hope," he said, drearily, and she opened the door. Martin sat by his desk leaning his head upon his hands.

"You are sick, father?"

"No, only tired, and—I must tell you—I fear I shall lose my situation. I have been a slave, but I cannot quite give up all freedom of thought to those men."

"I don't think you will care much at losing it," Hope said, composedly.

"And what are we to live on?" he asked, looking at her, as if he thought she had taken leave of her senses.

"On your genius, father," she cried, proudly, "for you are to be a great man—Mr. Bornley says it, and I say it, and you shall!"

She laid the proof sheets, and the bank check, on the desk before him.

"My book!" he exclaimed; "a check for me?"

"Standish has taken it, father, and will take another—your fortune is made. I am so glad, oh! so glad!"

The time had gone by when anything could move Southgate's heart to the wild excitement of delight; but when he thoroughly understood, his first thought was to thank God, who had given him such a child.

The book was published, and was a success; and after all those years of toil and neglect, Southgate found himself suddenly raised to eminence, applauded by the very men who had once laughed at his efforts.

He was not vain nor proud—he seldom thought of it—never realized that he was distinguished, for the misery of fame is that it always comes too late.

But from that time there was no more want, no more petty debts, and in the sunlight of prosperity, Southgate's soul rested itself like a shipwrecked mariner reposing on the beach and hearing still the roar of the waves, from which he has barely escaped.

The close of the year was darkened by the death of the wife and mother. They all grieved for the helpless woman, but one who had so utterly wasted her life as she had done, could not expect to be missed—she had not made her place holy, and, therefore, though she left regret behind, they could not hallow her memory into religion.

Time passed, and every year Southgate rose higher in the literary world—he had reached the pinnacle of success, and the love of his children kept his heart from feeling that void which distinction so often brings.

Hope was nineteen now, and Bessie just in the brightness of early girlhood. Both were lovely girls, but Hope had nothing of the buoyancy and light-heartedness, which made Bessie's youth so beautiful—she had grown old too fast for that—suffered too deeply with her father's pain; but she was a woman to win admiration and respect, and true, earnest affection from those in whose natures love is something more than passion, something holier than an idolatrous dream.

But another trouble came upon Hope, one for which she was not prepared, but under which she did not give way. Their father's position took them much into society, and among the men who crowded about them, was one about whom Hope's fancy flung the bright hues, with

which young girls are accustomed to clothe an object of affection.

Landor came much to the house, and as Bessie was more petulant and wayward with him than almost any one else, Hope believed that she disliked him, and often she never came down during his visits. But there was a change in her, over which Hope grieved, and so sought to win her confidence, but received only mocking laughter, or downright ill-nature.

At last, when poor Hope's fairy dream was the brightest, a rude shock dispelled it, and brought her back to the actual life, which looked cold and dreary enough after its sunshine.

Landor called one evening looking pale and dispirited. Hope sang him his favorite songs, and did her best to cheer him, but he appeared so obstinately moody, that she grew almost gloomy herself.

"Miss Southgate—Hope!" he said, suddenly.

She started, and there was something in his face, which sent the warmth from her heart.

"May I speak with you frankly?" he went on; "you have been such a kind friend to me, that I feel I may."

She could find no answer.

"You must have seen," he said, his handsome face glowing with the feeling that trembled in his voice, "how much I love your sister—will you tell me why she avoids me?"

Struck the cruel blow upon her heart, and never knew that he had wounded her—smote every bright hope with the black frost of his words, and left them clinging sore and dead upon her soul, unwitting always of her pain!

Hope closed her eyes for a moment, to gather strength—the world seemed literally passing away.

"You are silent," he said; "then she does hate me?"

Only the heart that has been tried can understand how Hope's strong will crushed back the withering pain, and bound the shuddering pulses with an iron hand.

"You gave me no time to speak," she said, not a trace of emotion in her voice, cold and hollow to her as clouds falling upon a coffin-lid—no trouble in her face—nothing but the weary look in her eyes, through which her stricken soul looked out.

"May I hope, dare I?" he cried, wildly. "Oh! I have waited so long—suffered so much—can there be such happiness near?"

The past weeks shot in review before Hope's memory—she understood all now; Bessie's petulance and hours of depression, and Landor's kindness to herself.

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"Wait for me here," she said, "I cannot tell how this thing is, but Bessie shall answer you herself."

She walked steadily out of the room, never heeding his broken exclamations, and went up stairs. She opened the door of Bessie's chamber, and in the dim light saw her sister stretched upon the bed, weeping like a grieved child.

"You have done wrong, Bessie," were her first words, "I saw that you were unhappy, but could not divine the cause. Go down stairs, little one, Herbert Landor is waiting for you."

Bessie sprang off the bed with a cry.

"For me—do you mean——"

She could not go on, but hid her face in the bed clothes. Hope raised her, and began to arrange the disheveled ringlets.

"He will tell you himself, Bessie, he only wanted me to send you to him."

The girl went down stairs, and Hope was alone. Luckily her father was out; it could not be sinful to grieve for a little hour over her beautiful dream!

But when Bessie returned, she found Hope calm and quiet as ever. Hope did not shrink when her sister embraced her, and told the tale of her past suffering and present bliss.

"I thought he loved you, Hope. I knew you did not care for him, and I almost hated you that you should have come between his heart and mine."

Hope heard it all, kissed her and blessed her as a mother might have done, and lay down by her side to watch the night out, while Bessie murmured in her happy sleep.

The next day, Landor called upon Southgate, and when the young man had gone to find Bessie, Martin sought Hope.

"You know," he said, coming upon her in the quiet of her chamber, "you have heard it all?"

"Yes, father, and Bessie is very happy."

"And my Hope, my all?"

"Blest in her sister's happiness!"

He put his arms about her, and she clung to him as in the olden time, weeping for a space, but so quietly he scarcely felt her tears. No word of confidence passed; whatever Southgate imagined or knew, was buried in his heart, only from that day, he watched his darling even more tenderly and constantly than before.

The brief months of Bessie's engagement passed, and the bridal morning came.

Hope dressed her with her own hands—stood beside her at the altar—and those who had known her all her life, marveled at the saint-like calm which made her face so beautiful.

All was over—the gay breakfast—the tearful leave takings—Bessie and her husband were gone.

Hope stole up into the library for a little rest, leaving her father with one or two old friends who lingered still.

She stood by the window and looked out into the little park, bright with early spring, and the void in her soul ached with exceeding bitterness. She did not love Herbert Landor; it was a dream, every trace of which had been carefully covered up; but still in her heart there was a craving and loneliness unfelt in the old life of solitude, which might never come back to her.

Some one spoke her name; she turned and saw her old friend, Mr. Bornley, looking at her.

"Forgive me, if I intrude," he said, "but I was waiting here for you, I felt certain that you would come in. Sit down, Hope, I want to talk to you."

She obeyed him; she had always been accustomed to doing so, just as she would have obeyed an elder brother.

"Hope," he said, in his clear, honest voice, "can you ever look upon me in any other light than a friend—will you let me be something nearer, dearer to you—will you be my wife, Hope?"

She looked at him in simple surprise! In the pride of his intellect, the glory of his fame, he had seemed as far beyond her sphere, as the sun that brightens the earth with its beams.

"I have loved you for a long time, Hope, even when you were so young that the idea of marriage would have been out of the question; but, brave little Hope, you have been the one love of this poor life that has gone far on toward its meridian."

She could not let him continue, it seemed cruelty, although his words were very pleasant to her.

"Please don't," she said, in her former child-like way; "I can't hear you, Mr. Bornley, indeed I can't."

"Then you do not love me. I have deceived myself. Well, my little Hope, it is only one pain more."

"I am not worthy to be your wife! It is only a few months," and the crimson on her pale cheeks showed the effort that avowed cost her womanly pride, "since I thought I loved the man who is now my sister's husband. The dream is gone—I know it was only that—but the pain is there still."

Bornley bowed his head in his hands and was silent. It was hard to see the hope that had so

long made his life beautiful fading farther and farther from his reach.

"I have the courage to say this," she went on, "because I feel it is right. Oh! Mr. Bornley, we shall be friends still; you will not put a poor foolish girl wholly away from your heart."

"I could never do that, never!"

He took her hands and folded them together in his own, looking into her eyes with his deep, earnest gaze.

"Neither can I put my dream away as you have done; for mine was the only promise of happiness I could look for here. I am going away now—it may be a long time before I can return; but remember, Hope, when I do come back, the question I have asked to-day will be on my lips again."

He kissed her hands and went slowly out of the room; to Hope it seemed as if she had let the best part of her life drift slowly from her hold, and had not the energy left to cling to it.

Martin Southgate and his daughter went on in the calm life which had settled down upon them. They were happy, for love like that between their souls must have brightened any existence.

It was Hope's twenty-fifth birthday! Her youth was going from her, but it left in its place a holy repose and steadfastness of purpose which made life still more beautiful than it had been in her girlish days.

Her father had gone out, and she sat in the library watching Bessie's little boy, as he lay asleep upon a cushion at her feet.

The door opened, and Hope said, quickly,

"Father, come and look at little Martin. If I move he will wake, I am afraid."

There was a step, but not like her father's. She rose quickly and stood face to face with Mr. Bornley.

"You have come!" she exclaimed. "I am so glad—my father will be so happy."

She strove to question him of his travels, trying to keep down the color that glowed in her cheeks; but he would not be put off thus. He held her hands tightly in his own, and, as of old, his eyes read her very soul.

"Now, Hope, will you answer me? Can you be my wife?"

Her eyes sank beneath the fervor of his, but he would not let her go, and pressed still for an answer.

"Why, I am an old maid," she said, feeling the tears so near her eyes that she could only keep them back by a poor jest.

"I know you are," he said, bluntly, "the

young girls all call you so. I am over forty, Hope, I am not too young."

She was silent still. The tumult in her heart would not allow her to speak.

"Answer me, Hope, do you love me?"

The color died out of her face. The holy calm, like prayer, that in moments of deep feeling illuminated her face, stole over it then.

"I do love you," came her answer, "and I will be your wife!"

There was but little said for a time. Bornley held her to his heart with the deep sigh of a man who has realized, at last, the want of a life-time.

"God is very good to me," he said; "I will guard you well, my Hope!"

They conversed for a long time, and Hope let him see all the rare treasures of her heart, as no other human being save her father had ever been permitted to do, and that proud, care-worn man renewed his youth in the freshness of her soul.

Martin Southgate entered, and found them

together. He needed no explanation; from the first he had known everything.

"With any other man than you," he said, "I should feel that I had lost my Hope; as it is, I know that I have gained a son."

In quiet and established happiness there is little to record. What Hope was to her father and husband no words of mine can describe. The tears are in my eyes as I think of her; but this feeble sketch portrays her character so faintly, that no one in reading these pages will be able to realize anything of the true woman—the Hope of their lives.

Here I leave them!

Martin Southgate had been saved from the moral shipwreck which once menaced him, and, though the wild dreams of his youth had never been fulfilled, the life before him had enough of beauty and peace to compensate for the loss of those visions which cannot be realized here, but may perhaps await us on the threshold of the hereafter—angel-pinions to bear the freed soul into the second and higher cycle of its existence.

glancing from her work at Nanny's face as she stood, shovel in hand, soberly looking on, easily guessed her thoughts; neither did it take that dusky, thoughtful image on her hearth to put into the young teacher's head certain longings for the good of her injured fellows. She often thought with shame and regret of the great wrong they suffered in being kept in ignorance of all that might make them noble and good, for the profit of others.

One winter evening she went into the study where the gentleman whose children she taught was sitting by a cheerful open fire, with his two oldest boys.

"Sir," said Miss Lucy, directly, "shall you object to my spending an hour every evening in Nanny's kitchen to teach the children a little?"

The gentleman looked up, surprised. He was, it happened, one of the very law-makers who helped to say to all the black people in the state, "You shall not learn to read."

"Ahem!" said he, slowly, "You know, I suppose, it isn't just the thing. I'm willing enough they should learn to read—always meant to have them learn some time. But just now, you see, I'm afraid it will create disturbance;—at some future time, perhaps—"

"But," urged Miss Lucy, "I am willing now to give them a portion of my time; they might not always have such an opportunity."

"Papa," said Cyril, looking up from the pages of one of the "Fables," "I do think you ought to let them have a chance—you keep always saying you mean to. Only to-day Nanny told me he do anything to learn to read; and I mean to teach him his A B C myself if you don't let Miss Lucy."

This word from Cyril seemed to turn the balance in his father's mind, and turning to the teacher he said,

"Very well, you may try it, Miss White—but there must be nothing said about it, not on any account."

The next night, to Nanny's great surprise and joy, Miss Lucy entered the kitchen, followed by Cyril, bearing an armful of primers and slates, and said, "Call Hetty's children, Nanny; we're going to have an evening-school here."

The children shouted and capered at this news. Nanny, in a flutter of glad excitement, ordered them to "quit their noise," and "mind their manners," at the same time saying to Miss Lucy, "Laws, Miss, 'pears taint no fit place for you to come to. Jane, run ask Missy for a clean chair! Make a hurry now!"

"Go to my room and get one, Jane," said Miss Lucy. And while Jane has gone for the chair, and her mother to Hetty's cabin to tell the glad news, we will look at the kitchen. This is not *the* kitchen where the cooking is done—that is a similar building joining this—but this is Nanny's house or cabin, often called kitchen, however. It is a black-looking room enough, built of heavy, rough logs, and with no better wall than their bare unhewn sides, chinked with dirty mortar. There is not a single window, but on opposite sides two doors, and one of these in day-time is always open, no matter what the weather. The walls are smoked and black, the bare floor is black, and so are the chairs and the few pieces of old furniture. On one side are three beds, for in this one room the whole family live and sleep, and from one of them, little Loo, the youngest, is shouting and singing scraps of hymns at the top of her shrill voice. Five ebony-faced children sit or lie around the huge fire-place—but that is not dark; that is the one bright thing in the dingy cabin, and it is bright and beautiful enough. A broad sheet of gold and purple flame goes rushing up the wide sooty mouth of the chimney from a bed of crackling logs, darting its tongues about like playful, restless, flaming elves chasing each other in and out and up to see the stars. The bright fire-glow was all the light they usually had at night, and the brown shining faces of the children looked merry and contented enough, though shy, as Miss Lucy stood watching them.

But when Nanny came back she proceeded to get a light. This consisted of a sort of iron saucer, a little raised, which she called a candlestick, a piece of twisted cotton lay on it, floating in fat, and burning with a red glare and much smoke. Bidding the children "mind themselves," she sat down by the candlestick with some rude work, and the business of teaching proceeded.

Not much was done the first night of course. Miss Lucy found she had a class of willing scholars, and bright enough, but as rude and ignorant as young savages. Jane, the oldest girl, and Jerry, a boy of fifteen, had picked up their alphabet; they might go into spelling; while the rest formed an A B C class. You can imagine it was not a very easy task for either teacher or scholars. It was the wrong time to study, the hour when they had been used to frolicking or snoozing around the fire; and many a time little Donk and Shree, his sister, had to take a run around the house in their bare feet, to wake themselves up. Then Nell and Loo would caper and shout from their trundle-bed, to the great confusion of all the rest, nor could they always be quieted by Nanny's heavy slaps.

Still they kept on, glad to learn even a little, and pleased with any progress. By-and-by, two great, grown men from the "quarter" begged to join the class. It was a strange sight to see these dusky men bending their heavy, serious faces over *a b, abs*, with Miss Lucy, fair and pleasant, patiently directing them. By spring, in spite of many hindrances, the two older boys, with Jane and Jerry, were slowly reading, and making progress in writing; and the younger ones were spelling and exercising themselves in various slate and pencil arts; all were encouraged, both pupils and teacher, while Nanny and Hetty were unspeakably proud and grateful to see their children really learning like white folks!

One afternoon, however, about the time the maples began to blossom—which was in early March—Miss Lucy was summoned to the library, where she found her pupil's papa walking to and fro in a state of excitement, with a disturbed and unpleasant face.

"This nonsense I allowed you in, Miss White, is making a great stir, I find, it must be given up," said he.

"What do you mean?" said she.

"Mean! why your teaching my negroes to read. People have got wind of it, and if it isn't stopped, I shall be prosecuted."

"It seems a pity, sir; the children are very eager to learn a little—perhaps they are only empty threats," replied the teacher.

"Not at all, Miss. Besides, I have political enemies, who will use this to defeat me in next fall's election."

"Ah, indeed!" said Miss Lucy; she perceived now what the real trouble was. Not prosecution, but the loss of office, was the bug-bear.

"Besides," continued he, "you have been teaching them to write—nothing was said about writing—that I never could have consented to; it enables them to write passes for themselves and for each other, and so to escape from us."

"Very well," said the teacher, quietly. She knew better than to argue or urge the point now. She had been much more surprised to gain permission in the first place, than she was now to have it withdrawn.

It was a sorrowful thing, however, that night to tell her class that their morsel of the bread of knowledge and life—whose taste they had just begun to enjoy—must be snatched from them.

"Some of you had begun to have hopes of substantial knowledge and improvement," said she; "it would have been better, perhaps, never to have tried to do anything; but try not to lose what little you have got. You can help each other; and some of you, I know, can make much of even this little. I would have given you more, and better, if it had been in my power."

The children lamented some, but the older ones neither complained nor denounced their master; they were used to being deprived and to submitting. Only in the dark faces of Nanny and the two field-hands, there was a glance that seemed to say, if they might be free they would "use it rather" than be always in bondage and ignorance. They had had a dangerous taste of their own powers.

Miss Lucy never learned whether the pot-hooks and straight strokes she guided rough hands to make

ever did form themselves into a pass to carry a slave from bondage to freedom. She knew there was great power in them to accomplish such a thing, as well as, in some of those mute, intelligent, oppressed beings, when the time should be ripe for it. No word or hint beyond the lesson of the primer did she ever drop to poison their unhappy lot—but always in her heart she prayed that the morning of knowledge and liberty might break speedily for them, and find them watching and ready.

MISS LUCY'S EVENING-SCHOOL,
AND HOW IT ENDED.

A True Incident.

"CAN you read, my little boy?" said I to a brown-eyed little fellow of eight years.

"Of course I can!" was the quick, indignant reply.

And whenever this Family Page of *The Independent* makes its weekly visits, "of course" the children of eight and ten read it for themselves. It is a rare thing to find a child of ten years who cannot read; rarer still to find one of twelve; and probably none of you know the boy or girl of fifteen who has never had even a chance to learn. For this is the land of the free, and of free schools, too. Knowledge and liberty walk hand in hand over our broad country, and, doubtless, we are a glorious nation.

But there is a heavy cloud in our sky; it scowls and lowers to the southward. Things are not every-where as with you. Not a great way from us, some children whom I once knew live, who, from the time they are old enough to wish to learn, always learn to say mournfully, "Of course I never shall know how to read."

These children did not live in the woods, but near a flourishing town where there were several schools. Their mother, however, was a servant, and they were said to be born servants. Moreover, the state where they lived says in its laws, Servants shall not be taught to read or write. Do not suppose this is a rule without reason. The law-makers think they have a capital reason; and what do you suppose it is? These servants are *black*. The gates of knowledge, and all the pleasant fields lying beyond, where other children gather delightful fairy tales and pleasant stories to amuse their youth, and instruction, and culture, and religion, to enrich and solace their lives, are shut on these, because they are born black. But we will leave the law-makers, not being wise enough, of course, to correct them, and tell you a story of this family we speak of.

Their mother's name was Nanny, a stout, good-natured, sensible woman, as black as her pots and kettles. One day in autumn, a carriage drove through the grounds of their master's plantation, and in it was the new teacher, come from the North to teach their master's children. All the little dark people put their heads out the kitchen door, or stood gaping near the gate to see this new wonder, long expected and talked of. The lady suited them well; she was fair and tall, with deep, smiling blue eyes and good features.

"Just as I 'lowed Northern ladies looked," said Nanny, who had never seen one of the species before. While she and Hetty, the laundress, stood gazing from their cabin doors, trying in vain to drive back the crowd of dusky curly-pates, Miss Lucy, the new teacher, passed into the house; but not before she had caught sight of their dark faces and glistening eyes, peering curiously at her.

Nanny and Hetty both found they liked Miss Lucy very well, and were anxious always to please her, and she in her turn was kind and polite to them. It never occurred to them, however, that she should do anything for them more than to speak pleasantly, and laugh occasionally with their children.

But Nanny, who had an intelligent, though untaught brain under her bandanna, used to sigh sometimes when she swept the trim little school-room, with its wonderful globes and maps and piles of books—a place full of mystery and wonder to her. She thought it must be mighty nice to have children learn so much. Sometimes when she came in to mend the fire in school hours she would stand and gaze at the busy faces bending over their pages, and feel rather a sharp kind of pang as she compared these to her six boys and girls rolling in the grass with the dogs, or sweltering in the fields under hard work. Miss Lucy,

MRS. BOWEN'S PARLOR AND SPARE BED-ROOM

BY ALICE B. HAVEN.

RURAL architecture was not the rage in Plumville; its inhabitants, as a general thing, were too much occupied in building up their fortunes. Mr. Bowen's house was a fair specimen of those occupied by the business part of the town, though, to be sure, Lawyer Green had a stone mansion fronted by a strip of land which his wife called lawn, and opposite to it rose the white Grecian temple, with huge wooden pillars from piazza to roof, in which Dr. Dunbar resided. But Dr. Dunbar did not depend upon his practice, as all who are familiar with "Dunbar's Anti-bilious, Anti-rheumatic Panacea" and unfailing "Compound Extract of Blood-Root," warranted to save all undertaker's bills, are aware.

The Bowens were a fair representative of the "middling class," as the tradespeople in England submit to be called, though in this country we resent first and second class carriages, and accept general discomfort and confusion instead. They owned a two-story wooden house on High Street, with green shutters and a door-bell. The wing distinguished it from the Gerrys', which was, in other respects, precisely the same. The wing was only one story, however. It had been Dr. Dunbar's office when that distinguished ornament of the medical profession was a practising physician. The Bowens had altered it when they went into the house, and it had been held sacred from that time as the "spare bed-room." This was a cheerful room in itself, opening so conveniently into the parlor, though it generally had a chilly, damp feeling, from being shut up most of the year, as the Bowens had so few visitors. The sitting-room was also the dining-room and family apartment. Time had been when the meals were taken in the kitchen, and "the hired girl" had her seat at the table with the rest of the household; but Mrs. Bowen's sense of propriety had led her to be among the first of the innovators on this unpleasant custom, which gave you the mingled odors of meat and vegetables, the hissing of the just used frying-pan, or the smoke of the scorched beef-steak, by way of accompaniment to the dinner. So many of the Plumville domestics "grumbled" at the additional steps which this reform occasioned, as well as at "not being considered as

good as anybody," that Hannah, with all her faults, was a desirable "help." For her part, she preferred having her dinner to herself, and nobody around "if her beau should happen to come in a little early." The second story was entirely occupied as sleeping-rooms, Hannah's being in the attic over the kitchen.

All Plumville arranged their houses much after this fashion. They had their "front rooms"—unopened more than once or twice in a month, on the occasion of a solemn tea-drinking or a formal call from the minister—and the spare bed-room was a matter of necessity, a stereotyped appendage to gentility.

"You ain't very well this morning, mother," said Mrs. Bowen, cheerfully, as her mother-in-law came shivering to the table, on a wintry morning, wrapped in a printed woollen shawl, of a style that heralded the plaids.

"As well as I ever expect to be, 'Liza. I ain't nothing but an old cumberer of the ground, and my rheumatiz is worse than ever. 'Pears to me I'd rather go without breakfast 'most than to have to come over them stairs for it."

"I wish you didn't have any stairs. I'm sure I don't believe but what we could have a stove put up in your room this winter, and Kate or Johnny could just as well carry up your meals."

Mrs. Bowen brightened up with the prospect of making "grandmother" more comfortable. Hannah would grumble about another fire, and it would be just so much more expense, to be sure; but she would make the children carry up the wood, and build it herself.

"I dare say you'd like to get rid of me altogether," groaned Mother Bowen. "It's always the way old folks is treated—shoved off, and shoved off, until they're pushed out of sight and sound, and then other people's satisfied. You needn't put yourself out to make no fire for me. I know very well what's under it. I can see sharp enough, if I can't hear so well as some folks."

It was useless to remonstrate against this injustice. Mother Bowen had taken up the idea, years before, that she was in everybody's way, her daughter-in-law's more especially, and every movement was colored by this suspicion.

The weather grew colder, until even Mrs. Bowen shivered in her own room, and thought that, if she envied rich people anything, it was a bed-room fire; and it was actually painful to see the old lady creep about the house, for, of course, every night's exposure to the cold above stairs increased the rheumatism, and she sat nodding in her chair behind the stove afternoons, rather than to make the exertion of going up for her usual after-dinner nap. Mrs. Bowen thought at one time of putting up a bed in the sitting-room. It was not without a precedent in Plumville; many very respectable families did so; but, apart from the inconvenience, it seemed uncleanly, since all their meals were taken there; and, giving that up, Mrs. Bowen wandered off into her front room to consider.

The parlor sofa was always her place of inspiration. Whenever she was worried and disturbed, and wanted to set herself right, Mrs. Bowen had a way of going into the parlor, drawing up one window shade, rubbing a little dust off the centre-table, settling her collar in the large looking-glass, and, then depositing herself in a particular corner, to think it out quietly. It was about all the use she had of the room, as she said to herself that day. It had cost more than all the rest of the house. The carpet, to be sure, was the same they went to housekeeping with—a white ground, with a pattern of lively colors—almost as good as it was the day it was stretched; but the chairs had been renewed, three years before, Mr. Bowen bringing home six mahogany and hair-cloth, with a sofa to match, from New York. He had his own share of pride, and he thought it reflected credit on his business standing to have mahogany furniture in his parlor.

Mrs. Bowen looked towards the spare bed-room door, and wondered whether Hannah had remembered to air the best feather-bed. Yes, aired and made up again, the room looking as tidy and inhospitable as spare bed-rooms usually do. The white half-curtains, with their borders of knitted fringe, were drawn together, the empty pitcher on the wash-stand was covered by a fringed towel, and tissue-paper protected the gilt frame of the mirror. It had not been disturbed since Mrs. Bowen's cousin from New York had paid her summer visit; and as her sister from the country had lately removed to New York, it was not likely that its repose would be broken for some time to come. It was too bad to have a bed-room right there on the first floor, entirely unoccupied, when the stairs were so hard for grand-

mother; yet she could not keep house without a spare bed-room—that was impossible. She never had done so—nobody in Plumville did. Where would company lay off their things? and what could she do if anybody *should* happen to come? So Mrs. Bowen sighed at finding no solution to her difficulty, and drew down the window-blind again.

But it could not shut out the idea of the unfitness of the thing, keeping the best and most comfortable room in the house for a possibility of use, when it was really needed every day; and her journeys thither, to lay the unheeded proposition, threatened to make a diagonal thin place in the parlor carpet.

"I didn't know but we should have to carry mother up to-night," she said, by way of broaching the subject to her husband, one cold December evening. "I had to stay and help undress her, the room was so cold, though she didn't want to let me. I can't bear to think of her dressing in such weather as this without a fire in her room."

"No, nor I. What *are* you going to do about it, Eliza? She's never had the rheumatism so bad before."

"That's it, the cold room; she's so feeble, and it takes her so long. I don't see but one way. If she had the spare bed-room, now, she'd be right on the same floor, and we could put a little stove up."

Mr. Bowen was as much startled as he would have been had his foreman proposed taking the front store for a workshop. "Why, what on earth would you do for company? Where would you put Kate?"

"She could have the big bed in mother's room, and take hers away altogether; she's getting old enough to have a room to herself, anyhow; and then, if company came, I could fix a place for her, somewhere, for a few nights."

"All very fine; but 'taint a going to do. Nobody that is anybody lives without a spare bed-room. Why, what would folks say? They'd think my business was running down right off. Too bad about mother, though; isn't it? Seems to me she gets more feeble every day; she used to be so spry. Well, fix it to suit yourself, I don't know much about such things; but I can't see such a mother as she was wanting anything that's under my roof."

"Specting company, are you, 'Liza? O my, I don't feel a bit like seeing people! Oh, my arm! I believe, if I'd known it, I'd just staid abed to-day; nobody'd a missed me, and I should have been out of folks' way! If 'twan't for those stairs, I'd go right back again. I

don't see what people want to live for, for my part. Dear knows, I never did." And Mother Bowen deposited herself on a parlor chair in the most uncomfortable position she could devise.

"Won't you come in and see how we've got the spare room fixed up?" said Mrs. Bowen, who stood with a tack hammer in her hand, and contemplated her work with evident satisfaction.

"I don't know as I care about it; every step's just so much. Why, you've been getting a rocking-chair and a settee for it, haven't you? My, how comfortable it does look! Why, who do you expect, 'Liza? That rocking-chair looks dreadful like mine, only it's covered different. Got a stove, too. It feels as if there was a fire here."

It did look very comfortable, the freshly made bed, with its neat chintz counterpane and valance, the same pattern as the covers of the chair and stuffed settee. The frame of the looking-glass, and the clean china upon the washstand were shining in the sun. Katy had added her sole treasure, a gilt china vase, to the decoration of the apartment, and an old-fashioned light-stand, dark and rich with age, stood by the side of the rocking-chair, turned half way to the window. But pleasantest of all, on this chilly winter's day, was the genial atmosphere diffused from a neat air-tight stove that, as Hannah remarked, "took up no more room than a band-box, and het up in five minutes."

"You've took my light-stand, I see." And the expression of curiosity and interest, on Mother Bowen's face, gave place to a sharpness that occasionally varied her bemoanings. "I should have thought you might have waited till I was in my grave before you begun; 'tain't likely I'm going to last a great while, anyhow. I sha'n't keep you out of anything much longer; not even my house room."

"But that's just what we don't care about, mother," said Mrs. Bowen, brightly; "we want to keep you with us as long as possible, and I've been fixing up the room to make it as comfortable as I could for you."

"Some folks wouldn't be satisfied if you just lay down and let 'em walk over you," remarked Hannah, tartly. "If a spare room isn't a going to suit 'em, I don't know what is."

"Just come and try your rocking-chair, mother; we put a pound of new feathers into the cushion, and Johnny and Kate made this stool to put your feet on, so you could have the other one in the sitting-room just the same. The parlor rocking-chair is going in there for you, and when you get your bureau in that

corner you'll be as snug as possible. See how far you can look up and down street; I had no idea so many people went by, always being at the back of the house."

"I hain't got a word to say." And Mother Bowen drew out the blue silk pocket-handkerchief she still persisted in using, as the actual meaning of all these proceedings dawned upon her. "I hain't got a single word. I never was so beat in all my life."

Which was the truth; for the jealous suspicion was fairly shaken, if not conquered, with the tremendous sacrifice of the spare chamber to her convenience, unshorn of a single elegance, and embellished by even the best feather bed. No one could have appreciated the self-denial more fully than old Mrs. Bowen, who had been a stirring and notable housewife, priding herself on her quilts, her beds, and keeping the best of everything for company.

"I always used to think Mrs. Bowen was a sensible woman," remarked Mrs. Gerry to Mrs. Toby, who was taking a sociable tea with her; "but the way she's been going on lately! Did you hear that she makes a sittin'-room of her parlor, this winter?"

"You don't say so! Does she let them children come in, too, all hours of the day?"

"So it seems. I guess her furniture 'll look well, by spring, don't you? Mary Jane, Mary Jane! Don't you hear me? Come right here, this minute. March out to the kitchen, both of you, and don't let me hear another word to-night! My, how troublesome children are, Mrs. Toby! Just half the time, I can't hear myself think. Yes, ain't it queer about Mrs. Bowen?"

"He's doing first rate, Toby says."

"Well, I s'pose he is; but not a great sight better than his neighbors." And Mrs. Gerry reflected complacently on the recent addition to her husband's lumber yard. "It's a growing place, and 'most everybody's business is doing well."

"Except Toby's, seems to me." And the tired-looking woman sighed. "It does seem to me he has the worst luck."

"You know Mrs. Bowen took her spare bedroom for the old lady, two years ago." Mrs. Gerry was too much absorbed in her theme to play the consoler. "Of course that made more or less tracking over the parlor floor; so, last year, she got a druggit for it, and this year she's found out—there goes Sam. Sam, Sam! Come back and shut the door."

The half-grown boy that had passed through the room a moment before, came back sulkily.

"What do you want?"

"I want you to shut the door after you, and don't go tracking through the house that way. Where's Albert? What were you doing up garret?"

"That's my business," answered the boy, in the same unfilial tone, "as long as I ain't in your way. Al's gone to the Vigilant meeting, and I'm going too. Tell pa Mr. Waterman says he can send in his bill again next week." And a slam of the two doors that lay between the sitting-room and the street announced his departure.

"O dear!" sighed Mrs. Gerry. "I do believe there never was such children as mine. Mary Jane and Sarah's as wild as two hawks, and those boys go to every fire in town. Why, the night Tremper's soap factory burnt down, I never closed my eyes. Both of them there till daylight, and their father gone to Hornellsville. To be sure, I'm thankful to have them out of the house, generally. Your children are all little, Mrs. Toby, and you've no idea what a state such boys keep the house in. Whistling and hammering from morning till night, and whistling and shouting. It's enough to make people distracted. What was I saying about Mrs. Bowen?—oh, using her parlor."

"I don't see how folks can afford to keep so many fires," said Mrs. Toby, edging up a little nearer to the dull stove.

"Oh, that's what made her use the parlor. She finds that big stove heats the sitting-room enough for meals, and keeps the old lady's room comfortable, too, except the coldest of weather. They don't let it go out, day nor night. I don't see what's the matter with our lamp. Just wait a minute, Mrs. Toby; I'll pick it up a little. Seems to me the oil gets worse and worse."

There was no complaint to be made of Mrs. Bowen's lamp, that evening—of either of her lamps, we should have said, for there were two upon the table, reflecting almost as much light as they gave, they were so brightly polished. The table had been rolled in from the sitting-room, and was only cherry, it is true, but it was covered by a large cloth, blue and crimson, that would "wash equal to new." Mrs. Bowen's spool-basket stood near the lamps, and she seemed to enjoy her sewing, as she looked up around the room, and back again to her stitching with renewed industry. A cheerful fire was glowing in the open stove, and Kate, on the other side of the table, was so occupied with her crochet-needle and the printed pattern before her, that she had no time to talk.

Presently, the door from the dining-room to the kitchen "opened hard," and John, a bright-looking boy of twelve, came in boisterously.

"Gently, gently, my son; and what hair! Not fit for the parlor, that's certain, or those hands, either." So the lad disappeared for a time, and came back more quietly, in parlor order.

"Where's my 'Harper'? Kate, have you my 'Harper' again? Mother, Kate always—"

"No, I haven't." And a magazine cover of a very different shade of yellow was exhibited. "I've just got what belongs to me—the 'Lady's Book.'"

"There's your 'Harper' under grandma's 'Observer.' Don't go too fast, John. How about lessons, though?"

"Oh, it's Friday night, and we've got all day to-morrow to learn them."

"Too much time is worse than too little; I used to find that out. I can remember when I went to school."

"Isn't it funny to think mother ever went to school?" said Kate, pausing, with her finger on her place in the tidy receipt.

"Real funny. I guess she always had first rate lessons. Father says she always does everything about right. Well he does, mother! I heard him tell Mr. Gerry so, at the store, when they were talking about taking the magazines."

A glow filled Mrs. Bowen's heart. What can give greater happiness than the confidence of a husband and the fond praises of a child?

"Well, about the lessons. I used to put off mine just that way, and they would be hanging over me all through Saturday, and Sunday, too, for that matter, so that I never really enjoyed anything. Our teacher used to say that she always had worse lessons on Monday than any other day in the week."

"O dear!"—and the crochet-needle was laid down fretfully—"I never shall get this done before Christmas."

"I should think you might just let me finish this one thing." And John went on finding his place in the magazine. "I had to go to bed right in the middle of it, last night. It's all about Robinson Crusoe's island. See! there's pictures of everything."

"You know the agreement," said Mrs. Bowen, quietly; and, after a few more lingering looks, she had the satisfaction of seeing them both subside into their school-books, their attention quickened by the desire to get back to more agreeable employment.

A quiet hour passed. Mrs. Bowen's needle flew along rapidly; the two brown curly heads

bent studiously over the open books; grandmother's distinct breathing, as she fell asleep on the settee in her own room, was distinct in the stillness.

A long, low whistle was heard under the window, presently. Johnny's head came up, and he listened for a moment, then all was still again. Once more the signal sounded, so prolonged that John started and hurried for the door.

"What is it, John?"

A look half eagerness and half annoyance passed over the boy's face. "It's Al Gerry, I expect, mother. He offered to stop for me to-night."

"Ask him in, my son." And Mrs. Bowen went on with her work.

"Where's my cap? I don't believe he'll come in, though."

"No, he says he can't," said John, after a parley at the hall door. "Come in, Al; it's only mother and Kate. I don't believe I can go; I didn't say a word to father about it—I forgot."

"Teaze your mother, then; she'll let you off," whispered the awkward, shamefaced boy.

"Come along, if you're coming."

"Ask Alfred if he won't come in and stay here this evening," said Mrs. Bowen, rising and going out into the hall. "Where were you going, boys?"

"Tell her round the corner," whispered the visitor again, slinking as far out of sight as possible, but seeing the bright, cheerful-looking room, nevertheless, and thinking how good the fire looked.

"We were going round to see the new engine, mother, round to the engine-house. They say she's a beauty, and they are going to have crackers and cheese, and things."

"Oh, a treat," said Mrs. Bowen, pleasantly. "Tell Alfred he shall have some nuts and apples, if he'll come in. I think our parlor is a great deal pleasanter than a cold engine-house."

"That's a fact." And John shivered and thrust his hands in his pockets, as the cold wind rushed in. "La, come in, Al; mother won't eat you up, and I'll show you the greatest lot of pictures, all about Robinson Crusoe's Island. I guess I don't care about going, any how"—for there was an enchanting contrast between the cheerful room and the dark, cold street, at that moment.

"You're real mean; you promised," muttered the lad. "Catch me coming round for you again." And he closed the parley by an

abrupt leap off the front steps to the pavement, darting away round the corner.

Good management had spared Mrs. Bowen the necessity of forbidding the expedition, and there was no ill-will between mother and child to cloud the evening.

The lessons were finished, but cracking a dish of nuts in the dining-room had suspended the exploration of Juan Fernandez for the present, and Kate had rubbed the Spitzenbergs until their red cheeks shone invitingly, by the time it was accomplished.

"Now, if father would only come in!" the young handmaiden said, as she brought the plates from the closet. "Don't it look real cozy?"

"I guess Al wishes he'd stayed, by this time." And John helped his mother generously. "I know how it is. The men like to have us boys praise the machine, and 'bet' it will beat the other, and pat us on the back, and say, 'Just see, now, *he* knows! La, the "Goody" can't begin to come to tea!' And then, after awhile, they get to drinking, and smoking, and telling funny stories—the kind you don't like, you know, mother"—for John did not think it proper to explain any further before his sister.

"I hope the boys go off, then?"

"O no, they don't always; that is, they hang around and hang around, and get a drink, and the ends of the cigars. I know."

It was rather an indiscreet revelation for Master John, providing that he had not renounced the engine-house altogether.

"I think Al Gerry's real hateful," said Kate. "There's grandma awake; here, let me hide my tidy, mother, or she'll find out it's for her. Never mind, I know my lessons now, and I can work a whole hour on it to-morrow. Here's your chair, grandma." And she helped to install Mother Bowen in the parlor rocking-chair with much more alacrity than she would once have shown in her service. But "grandma" had come out wonderfully in the last two years; bodily comfort had softened the repining, discontented spirit; and their mother's constant example of attention to her wants had gone much further than precept.

"What d'ye say about them Gerrys?" inquired the old lady, in rather an elevated tone of voice. "I heard you say something or 'nother about them, hey?"

"I said I thought Al Gerry was real hateful. Well, he is, mother; you ought to see how he teazes us the minute we begin to play nicely.

I wish I didn't have to go with the Gerry girls, anyhow; I don't like 'em."

"Why?" said Mother Bowen; "they're as good as you be."

"No, they ain't," said Kate, stoutly. "They never know their lessons, and they're always running and racing through the street; ain't they, John?"

John was too much occupied for words, but he gave a decided nod in the affirmative.

"Their clothes is good enough"—and grandma drew forth the blue handkerchief. "Better'n yours. I saw 'em last Sunday going home from church; they had on silk frocks, and their ma had one, too, that I never saw afore, and a muff. Why don't you dress Kate more, 'Liza? She's getting to be a pretty big girl; folks won't care about going with her."

"That wouldn't hurt my feelings, mother, not one bit. I don't care about her going out much. Lucy Allen comes here more than she goes anywhere, I guess, and our minister's daughter is good company enough. I wonder who's with father; here he comes, talking to some one. Kate, get a chair; Johnny, open the door, so your father can see."

"My, how comfortable you do look!" And Mr. Gerry, who loved his ease, stepped in, in advance of his host, rubbing his hands, and pausing a little as the bright light met his eyes. "I wasn't going to come in at first; I thought you must be having company, it looked so light in here. You don't go in for economy, do you, Mrs. Bowen?" And though he enjoyed his neighbor's luxurious living, he thought it was "lucky" he had such a careful, saving wife at home. Such a fire, and two lights every night, would soon "eat a hole," as he expressed it, into the year's accumulations.

"We go in for being comfortable." And Mr. Bowen, who was now a pretty thorough convert to his wife's heretical doctrines, drew off his boots in the hall, and set his feet into the slippers Kate brought to him. "Slippers and all, you see"—and he held up one foot and then the other. "My little girl did those, every stitch—didn't you, Katie?—out of that 'Lady's Book,' or whatever that comes with Johnny's 'Harper.' Well, Johnny, how about Robinson Crusoe?"

"Well, some folks saves, and some folks spends," said Mr. Gerry, helping himself to a Spitzenberg, and attacking it without knife or plate. "I feel it my duty to lay up for *my children*. That's the good old way, isn't it, Mrs. Bowen?"

"That's what his father and I did"—and

the old lady sat up straighter with the reflection. "Don't no where he'd have got his start, if we hadn't."

"True enough, mother; but it is not necessary for me to be quite so saving, you know, because I had the start. I can afford to live different, and times are better."

"Don't you think, Mr. Gerry," said Mrs. Bowen, picturing poor Al in the smoky engine-house, exposed to moral contagion, "it's just as well to spend a little to teach children how to make a good use of what they will have."

"I hav'n't got no pride about me, I believe. What was good enough for me is good enough for my children. Common school education, and good figuring, that's about all they want." Mr. Gerry began to think it was his duty to bring his old neighbors down a peg or two, they were getting so set up. "If you want to make your children *genteel*, you're doing it."

"No, that isn't the word, exactly. I want to bring them up so that they'll never be ashamed, no matter what company they are in; and encouraging them to read and find out about the world, and what's going on in it, is one way to help it along."

"Give 'em plenty of money, and they'll get along fast enough! Hickory nuts are high this year, ain't they? That'll do, Johnny; but you seem to have about all that's going. Now, to be real candid, Mrs. Bowen, don't you think you could get along with one light, and just half that fire? My wife would." And, unaware of the real impertinence of the speech, Mr. Gerry looked around triumphantly.

"How are Mrs. Gerry's eyes?" inquired Mrs. Bowen, so gravely, that her husband looked up from his nuts to see if she had understood the implication of wastefulness. "I heard they troubled her again."

"Well, they do, considerably. The doctor says she's strained them somehow, and she mustn't use them much. She's had to hire a good deal of sewing this fall, and it's put her out, for she likes to save about as well as I do."

"I always told Mrs. Gerry she sewed with too little light, evenings; I strained my eyes that way myself, when I was a girl and lived with Aunt Peck. Oh! Couldn't I get along with one lamp? Wasn't that what you asked me? I don't think I could, sewing on John's clothes; black work at night is so bad for the eyes."

"Well, I guess I must be going. How well your ma looks. Hav'n't had so much rheumatism this year, have you, Mrs. Bowen?"

The old lady nodded her head sagaciously.

She had been trying very hard to keep up with the conversation, but only a word now and then had reached her.

"No, I'm as spry as a young girl, now. The house is so warm all over, we don't none of us ketch cold. Hain't had a doctor inside of it all winter, have we, 'Liza? It's a wonderful stove for giving out heat; and, keeping all the doors open, we don't have but this one fire out of the kitchen."

"Oh, sit down now; don't be going just yet," said Mr. Bowen, as his friend made a decided move for his hat. "It's early, only just half past nine."

"Yes, I believe I must be going; Mrs. Toby's at our house to tea, and I'll have to walk home with her, as her husband's gone to New York. Them boys of mine is never to be found of an evening."

Mother Bowen glided peacefully down the quiet current of her sheltered life, and fell asleep at last in the pleasant room, which she had come to call "The Chamber of Peace." It was a spare bed-room once more; but it was brightened forever after by the recollection of her grateful acknowledgment, at the last, of the many cares and attentions she had been surrounded with.

Mr. and Mrs. Bowen liked quiet now, when evening came, and established themselves more frequently in the sitting-room, leaving the parlor to the young people. Lucy Allen, the minister's daughter, came in very often, for she was engaged to John, and they were to be married as soon as his first year's partnership with his father had expired. All the young people liked to come to Mrs. Bowen's, and to borrow the new books and magazines they were sure to find there, and, at the Sewing Society, Kate was the one appealed to in any discussion about plain as well as fancy work. Her own work-basket was pretty full, too, for there were whole pieces of cotton and linen cut out and piled away in the empty drawers of the spare bed-room. Young Dunbar's saddle horse, and dogs, and flute had been brought into requisition for Miss Kate's service uselessly, to the great wonder and envy of Miss Green, the lawyer's daughter, who would have said "Yes," with half the besieging, to so many thousands a year. Kate had said "Yes" to a much poorer man, and probably never would ride in her own carriage, but her father and mother were satisfied. Mr. Allen said he had a noble head and heart, and as to family, it was all that could be asked.

Mrs. Gerry came over to see if it could really be true, when she heard that Kate was engaged to "that young Arnold, who was boarding with his mother at the Plumville House, last summer."

"Mary Jane heard it at the dressmaker's, last night," said Mrs. Gerry, "and I put on my bonnet the first thing this morning, and run right over. It didn't seem possible. Why, I heard his mother only just had enough to live on, and he hadn't got fairly started yet."

"Mr. Bowen thought he might as well give them a start as to have all the wear and worry of a long engagement. We sha'n't need a great deal ourselves, with John married and Katie gone, so her father thought she might as well have part of what was coming now."

"Well, well, I only hope it'll turn out all right"—and Mrs. Gerry drew a long sigh; "but my experience ain't very encouraging. It seems to me that we haven't had anything but trouble since the children began to grow up, after all our working, and working, and slaving for them. There's Sam—you know how he went off, because his father wouldn't take money right out and out, and set him up in business—I don't suppose we shall ever see *him* again; and Al doesn't seem to get along very well, somehow, I don't know why."

Mrs. Bowen knew, and all Plumville knew, that his idle, dissipated habits were what returned him a burden on his father from everything he attempted to do; but she thought silence the truest sympathy on this point of her old friend's domestic troubles.

"Besides all we have to do for Sarah and her husband. She *would have him*, you know—you might as well try to stop the ocean—and there she is, with poor health and two little children, and he off speering round the country half the time."

"You have Mary Jane, though," Mrs. Bowen said as pleasantly as she could, for it seemed very hard to have nothing bright to turn to, with all Mrs. Gerry's lifelong self-denial and hard work.

"Yes, but she ain't much help. All she cares about is being dressed up and parading the streets. Why, that silk dress of hers and velvet cloak cost more than fifty dollars! Just think of it! when I wore my brown merino eight winters, and it only cost me ten dollars to begin with, fringe and all! She doesn't seem to get invited round much, though; I don't see how in the world it is. Some folks' children seem to turn out well, and some don't. It's all luck, anyhow."

She could not see, poor soul, but her shut-up parlor and empty guest-room were daily witnesses against her, though they still preserved the faded remnant of their ancient splendors, and Mrs. Bowen's had been refurnished years before.

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been most cordially received by his family; had paid a long visit, in the course of the summer, to his Highland home; and was to meet one of his young sisters in Eldersley. Margaret's health and spirits were now recruited, and her past grief and present happiness alike exercised a softening influence over character and manner, which marvellously increased her beauty. Her father, her ponies, her garden, and her music, seemed to have sufficed her till she saw Henry Cameron. Then her heart woke to fuller life, and concentrated itself upon him. I have already said that he was well calculated to win a young girl's affections; yet thoroughly liking him as I did, the more I saw of him, the more I vaguely felt he was not exactly the man I would, if I might have chosen for her. It was impossible to imagine Margaret leaning upon him for strength and guidance. Loving him as she did, she would probably never find out her own superiority; but I plainly foresaw, that in any difficulty or perplexity, should such occur, it would be the part of her clearer intellect and firmer will to unravel or to decide. But I need hardly say I never hinted at this to her; had I done so, it would have been a death-blow to our friendship, for she firmly believed her Henry a very hero for greatness of character, and her spirit delighted to bow down before him, as before a being in all points nobler, wiser, stronger than herself.

Biddy was less tolerant of her young mistress's illusion—not that she ever ventured to breathe the real sentiments of her heart in her presence, for fondly attached as the faithful creature was, there was about Miss Moore a certain unconscious loftiness of manner which a little awed the Irish temperament; but of me she stood in no awe whatever, and I often heard her mutter her sincere belief that “the devil was in all, surely; the wedding-dress ordered before the crape was brown, and the young mistress so taken up with the captain, before the wild waves were tired of tossing the master to and fro out there in the salt sea.” Indeed, Biddy was always thinking of her master now, partly through contrariety and a general preference for lugubrious subjects, not uncommon among her class; partly, too, because of a vision she had had. When we moved to Eldersley, I had left her behind me for a fortnight; and as she was passing by the Acton gate, on the top of the coach, early in the morning, on her way to join us, she had, she protested to me, seen a countryman prowling about, who “favoured” Mr. Moore most strangely, and who, she more than suspected, was no living flesh-and-blood countryman, for all his homely dress, but her master's ghost. Of course I attached very little importance to poor Biddy's vision, and there was no need to caution her not to say a word on such a subject to Miss Moore. So the tale had gone out of my head altogether, when, about a week after her arrival in Eldersley, she came to me the first thing in the morning with the same look of horror I remember so well that fatal day a year ago, declaring, so sure as she was a sinful woman, that she had seen the master's ghost again! I really was out of patience with her at first; but there was a solemnity about her manner which I could not meet with ridicule, and I thought it better to treat the subject gravely, and try to dispel rather than to silence her evident terror.

It seemed that the evening before, when the carriage came to the door to take Margaret, Captain Cameron, and me, to spend a few hours with my friends, Biddy had stolen out into the area, “jist,” she said, “to see the tail of the young mistress's dress, and her small, little feet, as she got into the carriage.” We were less punctual than usual, so that she had to wait, and was looking about her, when her attention was arrested by the very same countryman she had seen before near the Acton gate. He was standing at some little distance from the house, with the light from the lamp post falling full on his face, and his eyes steadily fixed upon the door. He had a large beard, she said, and his hair was long and gray; but, so sure as she lived to tell it me, it was her lost master! While she stood there, benumbed with horror, the door had opened, and Margaret had come out, leaning on her lover's arm, and with a merry little laugh at some remark of his, had jumped into the carriage. “The man by the lamp-post gave a slight start forward, and, shading his face with his hand, watched the carriage roll away. When it was out of sight, he walked once or twice up and down before the house, looking up at the lighted windows, and then disappeared. I tried to convince Biddy that she had been deceived by some singular likenesses; that her quick Irish imagination, dwelling of late so much upon her master's image, had conjured it up in the gloomy indistinctness of the October twilight. But she was in no way to be shaken.

“Do you think that I, who lived fifteen years in the master's service, would not know his ghost? I saw his sad eyes and his ill-giant white hands, and I'll swear to them among a thousand! It's the love in his heart for his young daughter as has brought him back to look on her. Oh, ma'am dear, but it's awful to think of, and niver so much as a mass said to quiet his poor restless soul! Sure and I'll spake to Father Carroll, when we git back; for all the master was a Protestant, may be there'll be power to help him. I'll pay my wages down in masses!”

“Biddy,” I said, “I implore you never to breathe to mortal ear what you have seen—what you think you have seen, for I will not believe yet but what you are mistaken. Biddy, I know you love your young mistress; I know I owe trust you; if you are right—but God grant you be not right—it is no ghost, it is the wretched man himself, and there—there will be ruin and not a pin of it. And I tried to make her understand the felony of which his reappearance would prove her master guilty, and the destination to which Margaret would be reduced by its exposure. This last clause made a deep impression, and I saw plainly that the secret was safe. But as to the fraud against the insurance company, Biddy's native district had passed into the hands of some institution of that nature, and a hard, inexorable landlord it made; so, “Drat them insurances—serve them right!” was the conclusion come to on that head by the honest creature, who would not herself have stolen a pin.

Evidently, indeed, her mind was relieved of its horror; but, oh, what a weight she left upon mine! Could it indeed be so? I recalled the circumstances: the body never found, the desperate embarrassment, the heavy policy I recalled the strange obstinate refusal to bailing, the agonised farewell implied in that last night's embrace to his daughter, the absolute ruin which his death at that juncture averted. There was, indeed, a frightful possibility that Biddy might be right; if so, what would be my duty in the case? If silent, I lent myself to a fraud—I was a party to deceiving Margaret, I left her standing on the brink of a precipice. Yet I myself had not seen Mr. Moore; surely I had no right, acting upon the report of an ignorant and fanciful Irishwoman, to agitate his daughter's mind at this crisis of her life. Again, it was my part to watch this unhappy man, who had been a kind friend to me; to denounce him, to expose him to punishment, to ruin his daughter's prospects? Surely not. I must endure—so it seemed to me—endure in silence the horrible suspense; my best comfort the certainty that the unhappy father—if, indeed, it were he—would not again run the risk of discovery. He had seen his child, seen her bright and happy, and her lover's arm; he knew the success of the desperate game he had played; this would suffice him; he would return to the obscure scene of his own dishonourable existence, wherever it was, and would never be seen, never be heard of more. Biddy was safe as the grave; this mystery whether fact or fancy, would burden no heart but hers and mine. But the whole of that day passed over me in terror. It rained heavily, and Margaret did not go out; that was a relief. But she never approached the window without my heart being in my mouth. I longed to get out of Eldersley; but what reason could I assign for a move before the time fixed upon? Margaret's quick eye soon discovered my depression and anxiety, and redoubled her tender affection. I felt severe headache, and kept her as much as possible with me in my own room, which did not look upon the street. But day after day passed, and I began to hope the danger was over. The frost was prepared, the present pouring in; we were to leave on the morrow.

How well, through all these years, I can remember that last day! Isobel Cameron—a merry school girl—had come to spend it with her future sister, and the two were busy discussing some details of bridal-costume in Margaret's room, which opened out of the drawing room in which I sat. The door was thrown wide open. I could hear their merry laughter—every word they said, and watch their light figures moving to and fro. A selection of wedding-wreaths had been sent from the milliners, and Isobel insisted upon trying the prettiest on with the bridal-veil, and bringing Margaret in to show her to me. I shall never forget her in her strange attire as she stood there in the doorway. The deep mourning-dress, which she had never laid aside, clung closely to her tall rounded figure; the bridal-veil was white, whiter than the broad white smooth folds; and she sat on her knees, her head bowed, her eyes cast down; her little hands meekly crossed over her breast—she seemed half-ashamed of her own beauty. The tears ran down my face as I looked at her, but Isobel laughed highly at the “fair victim,” as she called her—then putting her arm round her waist, ran on: “But, after all, we need not pity her, Mrs. Malcolm. Though she looks so quiet, I believe she is very happy at the bottom of her heart.”

Margaret suddenly looked up. “Happy!” she exclaimed—“oh, too happy, I sometimes feel!”

The warm colour rushed into her cheek—her eyes shone, her whole form seemed to dilate, as for a moment she stood there, preternaturally beautiful, with the glory round her of her great happiness. Meanwhile,

Isobel's quick eye had glanced out of the window of the next room: “Oh, do look, do! there is the odd-looking man again! I noticed him as I came in, and there he is still staring at these rooms. Look, Margaret,” and she dragged her to the window. I rose—I would have stopped her, would have spoken, if I could. The next moment, I heard Isobel exclaim:

“Why, Margaret, you are ill—you are fainting!” and I rushed forward just in time to receive the sinking form into my arms.

“The excitement has been too much for her,” I said. “I beg, dear Miss Cameron, that you will leave her alone with me. I know her constitution; I have seen her suffer in the same way before.”

I had great difficulty in persuading the young girl to go away. My poor Margaret! This time she had fainted away, indeed. I took the wreath and veil from the death-like head; I darkened the room; I waited till consciousness should return. Not once did I glance out of the window to see whether the wretched cause of all this was there still; I would not be a witness against him. Margaret's fate should be in her own hands only. She came very slowly to herself, then opening her eyes, looked round her in horror.

“Hush, my darling,” I said. “You have been over-excited; you must not speak just now.” She passed her hand over her forehead—her mind seemed confused. I told her she must lie down and rest, and be quite quiet and undisturbed.

“Henry,” she whispered—“I must see Henry.”

“Yes, darling, you shall. You know he will be here this evening as usual—you will be better then.”

“I cannot wait,” she said, piteously. “I must see him now—now. You must send for him at once!”

Margaret, give yourself time to recover your calm, your presence of mind.

“No, no—send for Henry at once—I must see him now.”

There was no help for it, then. I wrote a short note to Captain Cameron; told him that Margaret was far from well, and urgently wished to see him. Before half an hour was over he came in, flushed and anxious.

“What had happened? What was the matter? Was she ill?”

I could tell him nothing—could give him no comfort; I could only summon Margaret, and leave them together.

Their interview seemed to me endlessly long; but it was not an hour by the little clock that ticked on evenly in the room where I waited before I heard Captain Cameron rush down stairs and out of the house. Soon after, I went and joined my poor friend. Oh, the change a few hours make! I should hardly have known her. All colour faded from her cheek, all light from the eye—the very gloss from the rich hair was gone. Her face was set and rigid. I found her in her own room putting on a veil and a shawl. It was about to close, but upon inquiry, we found the manager was still there, engaged in conversation with one of the directors, to whom both Margaret and I were well known—a fatherly benevolent man, whose presence was some slight comfort to me even then. He started at the sight of her face, and expressed his fear that she was ill. Waiving the inquiry, she proceeded to state, still with the same preternatural calm, that she had reason to believe herself not entitled to the sum of £20,000 realised by the policy on her father's life, and that she wished to take immediate measures for transferring it into the hands of the company; adding, that in the event of their sustaining no loss, she presumed no measures would be taken against the one who had been so unhappy as to perpetrate a fraud.

The astonishment her words and manner excited was of course unbounded. But for the corroboration of my presence and my grief, I do believe they would have thought her insane. The director seemed to feel most deeply for her, and nothing could be kinder than his conduct. It was arranged that the lawyer who had drawn up her marriage settlement should call at the office the following day, and that immediate measures should be taken for liquidating the whole claim that the company might have upon Mr. Moore. When this was over, we drove back, still silently. On reaching our house, I ventured to implore her to take some refreshment, some rest.

“Not yet,” was her reply. “I must watch for my father.”

She told me that another besides herself had seen him, and suggested that she should write to him, and trust it to his discretion, whether he would tolerate watch, and could give it unobtrusively to Mr. Moore's hands, without causing him so great a shock as her sudden appearance would do. “But, Margaret,” I said, “Mr. Moore may not return—may never return. This morning, when you saw him, he must have seen you start as you recognised him. You forget that his dearest wish is frustrated by his re-appearance. Some longing to look upon you has brought him back again and again; but now it is likely that he will run any further risk of discovery!”

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MY GODMOTHER'S STORY.

IN TWO CHAPTERS.—CHAPTER II.

When September came round again, the month so sorrowfully marked in my poor friend's calendar, I was very glad that circumstances concurred to remove us from the neighbourhood where the terrible event had happened. Some friends of mine had recently settled in Eldersley, and pressed me to take a lodging near them for a time. Margaret was always accommodating and anxious to promote the pleasures of others, and indeed, in this instance, there was everything to recommend the place to her own feelings—Captain Cameron being quartered in the town, and the wedding-coutt being more easily procured there; for it was now a settled thing that the marriage should take place in the middle of October. Margaret had wished it to be delayed for another year; but her lover's regiment was under orders for Canada, and her dread of a separation from him came to the aid of his own earnest entreaties. She had

of him, Margaret—his disgrace can never touch you. You will never hear of him more; to you he'll be as one dead. I don't care what my own family say. I care for nothing but to have you for my own—my Margaret, my own wife—mine for ever." And winding his strong arm round her waist, he raised her from the chair where she sat, kissed her hair, her lips, her throat, and clasped her to his heart again and again, as if he never would part with her more.

At length she partially disengaged herself from his grasp; and I could see her face. Its colour and roundness had returned, the soul's life was again there.

"You love me, Henry?"

No answer save a look into her eyes, and a long kiss on her fair forehead.

"You love me?" she said again, "I want to hear the words once more."

"I love you, Margaret. So sure as God above hears me speak, I believe no man ever loved woman more."

"You are willing to marry me, a portionless girl, and the daughter of a dishonoured man; willing to brave poverty and disgrace for my sake?"

"You are my life, Margaret; I cannot part with you. If we are poor, we'll struggle on together, and we shall be happy in spite of all."

"You can bear the world's sneer, Henry? This is no hasty impulse, that one day you may repent, you have counted the cost?"

"I have, Margaret. Night and day, since we parted, I've thought the matter over. I may have been a vain, idle, thoughtless fellow hitherto, I can change my habits; I can do without society, friends, everything but you."

"He loves me," she said—"he loves me!" Then turning to me: "You hear it; he loves me. He is generous and true." And again that ineffable beauty came into her face.

Henry Cameron looked at her as if, even to him, its radiance was new.

"And you love me, my Margaret? You forgive me—you consent?"

"I?" she said—"I love you, Henry?" And she laid her head down on his breast, and passed her fingers through his curling hair. It was a pretty picture, as I saw it through my tears, and thankful was I to believe that Margaret might yet be happy. But it did not last long. When next she raised her head, she was deadly pale, and her voice quite changed. "Forgive me, Henry," she said. "I have been selfish; but I wanted to be happy once more. I had so suffered; I had doubted of your love; I had thought poorly of you. Now, I have been happy. I know that I am dear to you—your poor Margaret herself, and not her fortune; and my love has all its old pride! And now, I can bless you, and there is no bitterness in this great anguish of bidding you farewell for ever! Hush! hear me to the end. My father—hush!—whatever he may be, he was tender always to me, and would have bought my happiness at the loss of his own soul. I must save my father; I must seek him till I find him. I shall find him; I shall work for him in some foreign land; there, as one knows that shame hangs on the old man's name. He, too, has suffered—his hair has grown white—my poor father!"

I could not resist interposing. "Dear girl, if, as I fully believe, all your efforts to trace your father prove vain, surely you will not wreck Captain Cameron's happiness as well as your own?"

"I shall find him!" she said, in a tone that silenced me by its calm authority.

"And you can give me up, then, Margaret? You have not a thought for my happiness; you sacrifice me to your father thus. This is your cruel resolve?" exclaimed her lover.

"This," she said, "is my unalterable resolve."

The young man's face grew very dark. His ardent love was but a great selfishness, and he overlooked her suffering in his own. Long and vehemently would he have pleaded with and reproached her, but that I implored him to spare her the further conflict, for which her deadly pale face showed that she was quite unequal, holding out to him hopes of a change of purpose, of another interview, but in my secret heart having no hope of either. As he turned to leave her, the grandeur of her nature seemed to flash upon him, and he came back and knelt at her feet. "You are an angel," he said. "I never could have been worthy of you; but I shall never love another woman!" Calmly the poor girl bent down and kissed him on his forehead. The clinging womanly fondness to which she had yielded herself up so lately seemed to have changed into the holy pity of an angel indeed. From that moment she had done with earthly happiness.

And still no word of Mr. Moore! It was now a fortnight since the terrible day on which his daughter recognised him; but she never gave up her firm conviction of his return. Her instinct was a true one. One night, Biddy saw him creep stealthily along the street, and stand still under the lamp-post, looking up at the window. The faithful creature's grasp was on him at once, and though he struggled hard, he could not shake her off. She implored him by the lost love and happiness of his young daughter—by the laughter of her childhood, and her weeping now—by the tears he had himself shed at the grave of the wife who bore her to him: she told him that Margaret had given up lover and fortune for his sake, and would he take from her life as well, and leave her alone in the world, the orphan of a living father, without a duty to bear her up against her sorrow? In short, she prevailed over the weak man's strongest purpose; and that night, when the rest of the household were asleep, she let him in, and he hid his face on his daughter's breast.

Two days later, they left England for the continent. The sale of her mother's jewels and her own trinkets brought in a sum sufficient to do away all that Margaret owed in Eldersley, and to provide for her father and herself till she could obtain pupils. Of these, her rare musical talents rendered her secure. Biddy positively refused to leave her young mistress. She had enough, she said, to pay her passage, and plenty of clothes, as good as new, for years and years to come. She could not be bothered with wages, would not know what to do with them. "And sure, miss, dear, the master will be wanting some one to look after him; and may be he'll find it a comfort to scold some one as he used to, in thim furin parts. And is it cooking ye want? Sure and I've not been out and in of the kitchen of one of the real gentry for so long without giving an eye to see how things get done. Anyhow, I'll cook a dale better than thim furiners; and it's going with ye I am, miss, to the end of the world, so sure as my name is Biddy Daly, and yours is written in heaven, glory be to God!"

They settled in Berlin. Margaret had soon more pupils than she could well undertake, and she herself played at morning concerts, in this way realising a tolerable income.—Her own letters were loving but short. She never complained, but I could perceive only too plainly that her spirits never rallied, that she was resigned, but cheerful and hopeful no longer. The great trial is the hourly trial. The very energy required for the prompt decision wears against the pain. The right hand cut off, and cast from us in a moment of generous enthusiasm, seems not so terrible; it is in the after smart, the sick reaction that is so hard to bear. Never by tone or glance to reproach those for whose sakes we have stripped our own life bare; never to believe that duty had been best undone, and selfishness more blessed than self-sacrifice—not many of us are capable of this. Perhaps even Margaret was not. Biddy's letters, with their marvellous spelling, were invaluable to me, for they gave details I should never have otherwise obtained, of admiration and love laid at the beautiful girl's feet. Biddy thanked our Lady that the young mistress was not one to demand herself by lookin' at a furinner, even if she had any heart to give, but sure her's broke that day Captain Cameron laid his hot kiss on her lips, and the angels took it to keep and mend in heaven. But these letters contained too many a dark hint respecting "the master's ways," that gave me a sorrowful insight into the daily struggle my poor Margaret was called upon to bear. It lasted rather more than fifteen years—yes, fifteen years. Then Mr. Moore's health began rapidly to decline. Weak and unworthy as his life had been, the pathetic beauty of his last days was all that Margaret afterwards remembered. He wore his sufferings with unflinching patience, and they seemed to ennoble his nature. His penitence, humble hope, and love for her, shone out very brightly towards the end, and he died blessing her for having saved him. That was her reward. Soon after, she returned to England. Youth and beauty were indeed gone, but might there not yet be happiness to come so intense as to restore both? Henry Cameron had never married; I could not help hoping they might meet again, when his regiment returned again from the West Indies. But he died there. Margaret had not been in England a year before I received a black-edged letter in an unknown hand. It was from the colonel of his regiment, and enclosed one from Captain Cameron. I opened it with trembling hands. Only a curl of his rich brown hair, and the words, "I for Margaret—my dear!" We never now breathe his name. She was too true to much cannot hear that emotion. But I know that curl has been on her heart ever since, and will be there when they lay her in her coffin.

With her father's extravagant ways, it was not likely that she could have saved money at Berlin. I implored her, on her return to England, to come and live with me, but I believe mine was an injudicious wish, and she steadfastly refused. Idleness her reformed occupation has been, and is a blessing to her. Biddy is with her still in her little Bath lodging—an old woman now, and disinclined to move—and, as you know,

Mrs. Moore gives lessons, is the regular music teacher, indeed, at a young lady's school. Every summer she pays me a long visit, every summer I think she grows more sweet and cheerful. Formal and cold you thought her? I cannot judge, I see my former Margaret still through what years have made her.—But I declare it's nearly dinner-time! I must go and call her."

MY SISTERS AND I.

A FAMILY SKETCH.

BY KATE BERRY POTTER.

CHAPTER I.

So, you wish to hear my story, do you? What made you think, madam, that I had any story to tell? Because you had heard that one sister had a disappointment and died of a broken heart, and the other made a very romantic match? Well, I suppose it *was* romantic for her to marry a man that had been—no matter, I will not mention it here. But, indeed, she was not at all romantic; she did everything as a matter of course. A grand woman is that sister Minerva of mine. I warn you not to expect a sickly romance, for there was too much strong principle and earnest love in Minerva's case, too much actual haggard wretchedness in Araminta's, to furnish food for weak sentimentalism. But to begin.

You would not think, from my present state in life, that I was reared in poverty. Such was the fact, but it was honest poverty. My father was a Connecticut man, a farmer's son, and he married a farmer's daughter. He was as honest and good-natured as the day is long—I mean a midsummer day—but he was not fond of hard work, and took no fancy to farming. In boyhood, he conceived a liking for a shoemaker of his native place, a light-hearted man, full of fun and stories, and, from hanging about his shop, made up his mind to be himself a shoemaker. My grandfather did not approve of this, but he never opposed it, and, dying before his son became of age, leaving a mortgaged estate, which was sold to pay his debts, young Benjamin stuck to his last. Very much such a man he proved to be as his easy master; he had no faculty for getting rich. At twenty-five, he married Hannah Buel, who thus became Hannah Perkins, and set up housekeeping, taking his old mother from an uncle's, where she was considered burdensome, to share the scanty comforts of his own fireside. When his mother died, after blessing her dutiful son, my parents began to think of emigrating.

This was near the beginning of the present century, when people in New England were

talking much of the western country, and the favorable prospects for getting a living there. My father's ambition did not travel beyond New York State, in the central part of which, then a real Eldorado to eastern people, he concluded to pitch his tent. My good parents set out in the spring, their only family one infant, the little Benjamin, who, to their ceaseless grief, died soon after they reached their new home. They travelled in a long wagon covered with white tow cloth, which held all their worldly goods, and enough provisions, mostly cooked, to last during their journey. They slept at country inns, where my mother took supplies from the wagon and "warmed up" for their supper and breakfast. I have often heard her tell about their box of baked pork and beans, and have myself seen the box—a round wooden one, with a broad handle—which held this substantial fare. It was a very comfortable way of journeying; I am sure we need not laugh about their homely ways. People suffer a great deal more now, going the overland route to California. I will warrant they would be glad of my father's box of beans, or my mother's long, twisted doughnuts.

My father, who had an eye for beauty, and, by the way, was fond of reading, selected as his home a pretty village near the banks of the Mohawk River. It had been settled about fifteen years, and was already a thriving place. A number of wealthy families from the East lived there, and had built themselves handsome houses—wide, square, two-storied white houses, set off by gravel-walks and flourishing elm-trees. The county courts were held there twice each year, and at least three lawyers, who have since been distinguished in public life, were settled with their families in the village of Sadaquada, so called from the Indian name of a creek whose waters kept in motion the only grist-mill of the neighborhood. Here my father hired of Deacon Ainsworth a small brown house, one room of which was used for his shop, and went quietly at work in his vocation.

And here in Sadaquada three daughters were born to him. Minerva came first. My mother had a fondness for long, softly-flowing names. I believe she had read a few novels; but she was a good woman, and as thrifty as possible. Indeed, I am convinced that to her wise management we owed much of our home comfort. She was not strong-minded, but she was strong-hearted, loving her family with great tenderness. A year and a half after Minerva, came Araminta, between whom and myself intervened six years. I was baptized by the name of Belinda; so our names all ended in "a," to which my parents always gave the sound of "y." I think I must have been the "odd one" of the family; people say there is such a one in every household. I was a scrawny, puny child, petted and nursed by my mother and sisters, but never attracting the notice of any one out of the family. As we grew old enough, we all went to the village Academy. Father had a sort of pride that forbade his sending us to the "district school," though he could ill afford paying for our tuition at the Academy. I was fond of study and reading, and, being delicate, my mother never set me at doing any but the lightest household tasks. My sisters, on the contrary, were strong and healthy. They sewed, swept, scoured, baked, and cooked with my mother at home, all working harmoniously together. More than this, they grew up to be very beautiful girls. The eldest well became her name; she was tall, and had a queenly air, her hair and eyes were black, her form and gait perfect. Araminta was of the usual height, and exceedingly fair—a blonde beauty, with abundant light ringlets.

The young men all admired my sisters. Besides the Academy boys, there were a good many law-students in the village; Judge Baine had no less than six in his office. Though my sisters were nothing but a shoemaker's daughters, my father's upright life and their own native-born ladyhood made them respected. Society in Sadaquada could not have been entirely exclusive, for I remember that my sisters sometimes went to parties at the houses of the "best" people. They never had rich dresses, of course, but they always looked well. For summer they had each a plain white cambric, which was washed and altered when necessary, and lasted for years. Araminta used sometimes to wish for something nicer, but Minerva would say, "Handsome is as handsome does," and, in a pleasant, but decided way, succeeded in making her sister contented.

I remember once, when coming out of church, I overheard two gentlemen talking near me.

"By George," said one, "those Perkins girls are fine-looking; they appear better in their calicoes than the Miss M.'s in their stiff silks."

"That's a fact," said the other, following Minerva with a steady gaze as she walked on in her own unconscious manner.

The last speaker was Horace Sheldon, who had called at our house a few times. He soon became a frequent visitor. It was an humble place where we received our friends. In winter, the kitchen, rag-carpeted, with its bureau, and looking-glass, and corner cupboard, all clean and comfortable, served as dining and sitting-room—for we could afford but one fire besides that in the shop. In the summer, we opened our little front room, which was furnished with more pretension. It had a striped, homespun carpet, of gay colors, and a little table bearing our large family Bible and a few other books, white dimity curtains with a fringe of small cotton balls which mother had brought from Connecticut, and a few old-fashioned chairs. Come to my room, some day, and you shall see those curtains at my windows, and the cherry table with the big Bible on it.

But I must go on with my story, or you will not wait to hear it out. Horace Sheldon was a law student, a very handsome young man, with pleasant manners, and was a general favorite among the ladies. He was an orphan, and dependent on his own exertions and talents. He had a tight-fisted uncle, a farmer who lived in the country, a few miles from Sadaquada, who, he used to tell my sisters, he hoped would aid him in setting up in his profession. My mother was quite flattered by his visits. But one morning, after he had spent the previous evening at our house, and had sat late with Minerva in the front room, my father said to her:—

"I think young Sheldon comes here too much, Minervy. I don't want these fellows trifling with my girls. We're poor, but we came of good stock, and there has never been a taint on my name or your mother's as far back as we know."

Minerva turned upon him composedly, yet with respect, and answered, blushing: "Father, we are engaged. I like him very much. Have you any serious objections?"

My father looked surprised, but, after a moment, said: "No, Minervy, if his character is good, and he can support you."

Minerva smiled. "He is poor now, father, and so am I; but in about a year he thinks he

can marry. He will be admitted then. And as to his character, father, you know everybody here says he is almost the only young man that don't drink and play cards."

My father was satisfied. Young folks in those days did not require five thousand a year on which to begin life. Nothing more was said on the subject. Sheldon continued his visits for about three months, when, one evening, on calling to see Minerva, he told her he was going to his uncle's, and should be absent a week or two. A fortnight had nearly passed. It was on a stormy, November night that our father came in from the post-office with a look of trouble and amazement upon his honest, pleasant face. We were all sitting by the kitchen fire in that small, rag-carpeted room where we kept ourselves warm in winter weather—the girls sewing steadily, and myself reading a story-book that a neighbor's child had lent me. My father shook the light snow from his old camlet cloak and stood on the hearth looking doubtfully at Minerva. Two or three times he tried to speak; at last bolting out with words like these: "Minervy, Sheldon's brought to our jail to-day; arrested on a charge of passing counterfeit money."

My poor sister threw down her work and rose from her chair. She caught hold of father's shoulder, and said, in a low voice: "Is that all true?"

"Yes, I'm afraid so," he answered.

Minerva was nineteen years old then; when she turned round towards me, she looked to be forty. She sat down and covered her face for a few minutes, then rose and went up stairs to her little bed-room. When she had gone, father told us what he had heard of this wretched affair. Sheldon had called upon his uncle for money, had been repulsed unfeelingly; temptation assailed him in the shape of some spurious bank-notes, with which, in an evil hour, he had sought to discharge several small debts. "The proof is dreadful strong," said my father. "He is to be examined before the Justice, to-morrow, and I expect nothing but what he will be committed for trial."

While he was speaking, Minerva came in, having on her long green plaid mantle, such as were worn in those days, and her head covered by her black silk hood trimmed round the front by a strip of chinchilla fur.

"Where are you going?" we all asked, in a breath.

"Up to the jail," was her answer, and she shut her lips tightly to keep them from quivering.

"You can't see him," said my mother, compassionately.

"Mrs. Green will never refuse me, I am sure," said Minerva.

Mrs. Green was the jailor's wife. She and her husband were proverbial for their kind hearts.

"I will go with you," said my father, who had just started for his shop. "It's very dark and blustering, and I'll carry the lantern. Belindy, run and fetch me a bit of candle."

So I ran and got the bit of tallow candle, and stuck it in the socket of the tin lantern—that pretty tin lantern, pierced full of holes arranged in diamonds, stars, and other shapes, that I admired so much, and used to wish I could have for my playhouse, but that father would never let me take, for fear I should break the glass lid.

I had been in bed, sound asleep, for an hour or more, when I was waked by Minerva's entrance. She took off her cloak, and knelt by the little round stand at the bed's head for a long time, as it seemed to me, then lay down at my side, and quietly moaned herself to sleep, holding my hand, as she was wont to do, in hers.

Sheldon was fully committed to stand his trial at the next term of the court, which would not be till March. That was a gloomy winter for us. Minerva went once a week to the jail. She was not often admitted to his cell, but would hold a brief interview through the diamond-shaped hole in the door. Sometimes I went with her, and remained a little way apart, while they talked together. Sheldon had a wild, haggard look that haunts my memory to this day. When the trial came on, I well remember what a period of suspense were those three days which it occupied. Many of the village ladies went to the court-room. Minerva staid closely at home. At times, she would busy herself about household matters, then she would take her needle, soon to drop it, and walk the house restlessly and in silence. On the evening of the third day, my father came in from the court-room. We all knew that the jury had been for several hours deliberating on their verdict.

"What is it?" said my mother.

Father turned away his face from us all, as he answered: "GUILTY! State's prison for ten years."

We heard a low wail and a sudden fall. Minerva lay senseless on the floor. It was her last sign of weakness.

He was carried to prison next day, when we

all went early in the morning to say "Good-by." The young criminal had been ably defended, but the proofs against him were overwhelming; and Judge Baine, who did not wish to be accused of unduly favoring one of his own students, had put the case rather strongly to the jury. Our interview was soon over, but I remember quite distinctly some things that were said.

"Ten years! it is a long time, and a convicted felon to keep faith with, Minerva," murmured Sheldon, who sat bowed down, with his face in his hands.

"I shall wait for you, Horace," were Minerva's words, and she put her arm tenderly round his neck.

When we came out, Minerva walked home with the air of a queen. "I shall save him yet, for a virtuous life," she said to my mother. Quite unconsciously, she was acting a romance. Since then, I have read Moore's songs, and I never think of that time without recalling the verses where these lines occur:—

"I know not, I ask not if guilt's in that heart;
I but know that I love thee, whatever thou art."

CHAPTER II.

DURING the winter just passed, we had had few visitors. A neighbor dropped in occasionally, sometimes to sympathize, and oftener out of curiosity. One young man had called frequently, and appeared to admire Araminta. His father kept the village inn, was an easy, careless soul, who let his son grow up without restraint, yet with plenty of spending money. Bill Dakin had already formed habits of drinking, and was idle. He would be called a "fast young man" now; then everybody thought him "wild," but not a great deal worse than his associates. My father did not like him. Araminta was father's pet; his eldest loved a felon, and he would not harbor the idea of encouraging his favorite in receiving the attentions of a man who seemed to him on the road to ruin. Minerva, too, openly disapproved Bill Dakin's visits; so, as Araminta was yielding, Bill was given to understand that his presence was not welcome. In the spring he went West, and we heard no more of him for several years. I think now that Araminta was not much interested in Bill Dakin; he had not succeeded in rousing any warm feeling in her breast.

After Horace Sheldon went to prison, Minerva began working very diligently at the business of dressmaking. She had long, with Araminta's

help, made the dresses for the family, and had a great deal of taste. Very little of her earnings did she expend for herself; all that was not needed for the household was carefully put aside. She said nothing, but we knew that she was working for Horace, that she might have a little fund to begin life with him on leaving the prison. We all had a vague hope that his term of confinement would be shortened; and, indeed, at the end of two years a rumor reached us, uncertain at first, but it was soon confirmed. Friends of Sheldon had interested themselves, and there was a prospect of their succeeding in obtaining a pardon from the Governor. Sheldon had behaved so well since he entered the prison, was so quiet, and worked so steadily at the trade assigned him, as to make a most favorable impression on the officers of the prison and all who had an opportunity to learn anything of his conduct. Minerva plied her needle with nervous haste now. She often brought her work home, to sew, undisturbed, in her own chamber.

One evening about eight o'clock—it was in the month of May, warm and rainy—we heard the tramp of a horse nearing our gate. It stopped there, and, in a moment, the door was thrown open and Horace Sheldon rushed in. He was booted and spurred, his boots covered with mud, and his whole attire travel-soiled. He had been discharged with a full pardon; friends had met him at the town of U—, ten miles distant, which he had reached that evening. There was no railroad then. Not wishing to be recognized in Sadaquada, he had been furnished with a horse, and had come on alone. I was almost a child, and though I remember many things very distinctly that took place earlier, yet the events of that bewildering evening seem like a dream in the past. I know that Horace and Minerva went by themselves into the front room and talked a few minutes. When they came back into the family-room, Minerva walked right up to father, and said: "Horace wants to marry me to-night. Will you go and ask Mr. Holmes to come up here?"

"Yes," said my father, putting on his hat quietly and going out. In about twenty minutes, he returned with Mr. Holmes, our pastor and steadfast friend. Meantime, Minerva had gone up stairs, slipped off her dark blue calico frock, and put on a white cambric. I wish I could see a picture of her, just as she looked then. We should laugh at it, I know, but at that time her attire was faultless. Her black hair was combed straight off her face, and hung

behind each ear in two long curls. At the back of her head was a high-topped comb, such as were worn then, which held her abundant tresses in a heavy coil. Her dress—I should like to be able to tell you how it was made. Look here, at this picture of the Empress Josephine. It was just such a short waist as that, with funny puffed sleeves, and the skirt scarcely wider round her ankles than at her hips; for hoops had gone out long before that period, not to come in again till after thirty years. There were no gas-lights, no supper-table, no display of rich gifts at that bridal, such as you and I saw not long ago, when Minerva's oldest daughter was married.

Good Mr. Holmes, I shall never forget him; he is dead now; he was a stern-looking man, a great scholar, but thoroughly good. I used to be afraid of him when I was little, and thought he lived always in that high, queer pulpit with the sounding-board over his head, where I saw him of Sundays, when I fidgeted beside my mother, and kept myself awake by drawing pictures with a pin on the seat. Well, he married them, and said something afterwards in his slow, solemn voice that I cannot remember now; but we all cried—Horace and Minerva more than the others. After Mr. Holmes had gone, father went out and borrowed a horse and chaise of our neighbor, Deacon Ainsworth. I should like to have you see that old chaise. I saw it myself only three months ago, when I went to Sadaquada on a visit, "turned out to grass" in the deacon's old barn. It had outlived its first owner—he is dead and gone these twenty years. Such a pokerish thing, I wonder anybody could drive in it without pitching over the dashboard, it was so high and toppling. Such was the carriage in which Minerva set out on her bridal-tour—not very much like the neat, dark green affair with drab linings which she has for her own now. The long old clock in the kitchen corner struck eleven as Minerva and father mounted the chaise, while Horace leaped on his horse and set off before them. Not much baggage did Minerva have, our dear, strong-hearted, patient one, when she left her father's house and went out to follow Horace Sheldon's fortunes. Only a little covered basket in her hand, and a small brass-nailed trunk.

The next morning, very early, father came back alone. "I saw them off in the stage for Albany at five o'clock," I heard him say to my mother. After that ours was rather a sad house for a while. Minerva's conduct was regarded in various lights by the village folk. Some of them thought she had done very foolishly and

would repent it; others commended her constancy and faith, and declared that she would be rewarded by his future good behavior. I heard Squire Grant, a purse-proud man, say to another, in passing our house one day: "A pretty piece of business this for that Perkins girl, that my daughters were trying to make something of by encouraging her in the dress-making line, to marry that good-for-nothing prison-bird. They deserve to be sent to the poor-house." Squire Grant did not dream then that one of those same daughters of his would desert her husband and end a life of shame by a pauper's death in New York, where Horace Sheldon's wife would save her from a pauper's grave by paying the expenses of her burial. Such a thing did happen, as you know.

As for Minerva, she justified her marriage by her own words to us before she stepped into the old chaise—"Horace says he needs me to encourage and help him at this particular time. He has come first to me, and I will not fail him."

They went to New York, where friends helped Horace to a situation in a mercantile house, with a fair salary. Minerva carried her frugal ways to the city, and they began housekeeping on a small scale. Before the end of a year, we had received substantial tokens of kind feeling from Horace. He wished me to become a teacher, and sent my father means to pay for my schooling. Nice presents of clothing came to us all. The autumn after Minerva's marriage, various reasons moved my father to leave Sadaquada. There were unpleasant associations for us all; we sometimes heard unkind remarks; and father thought he might do better, as he was not as strong as he used to be, to give up his own shop and take work from some large establishment. So we removed to U—, ten miles distant, a newly-incorporated city, and a very flourishing inland town. Here, too, I could attend an excellent school, with a prospect of becoming an assistant teacher in a short time. We hired a small house in a back street, and lived in comfort. You would think we might have been very happy there; but U— is associated with some of my saddest experiences, and I never think of the time when we lived there without a shudder.

CHAPTER III.

ARMINA'S beauty must have attracted attention in the town of U—. We went to public worship regularly at the since famous

Dr. B——'s church, where I used to see the young men staring at my sister. One evening, a few weeks before New Year's Day, two gentlemen surprised us by calling. We received them in our little back sitting-room, where mother was knitting, and Araminta sewing, and myself studying. Father had not yet come in from his evening's work. My mother was flattered by the visit; Araminta, always, rather shy, was pleased, though embarrassed. They were dashing-looking young men—one a Mr. Harrison, a merchant, at whose store Araminta had made a few purchases. He introduced his friend Mr. Truman—what a misnomer!—and both were very polite to my mother; and when my father came in, Mr. Truman took great pains to talk with him. I was never anywhere ashamed of my father, though conscious that my education in some things was better than his, for he knew a good deal of books, and was an unpretending man. Before they left, the gentlemen invited my sister to a New Year's ball to be held at M——'s hotel, then in the first glow of its great reputation as the best house west of Albany. Mr. Truman handed her a ball-ticket, and our new acquaintances soon took their leave. Araminta unfolded her ticket, which was a small sheet of note-paper, with a spread eagle and other devices at top, and underneath a printed invitation on this wise: "The company of Miss Araminta Perkins is requested at M——'s hotel, on the evening of January 1st, 182—." Her own name filled a blank in the types with a bold, dashing hand. Below were the names of the managers, embracing those of many of the first gentlemen in U——.

Araminta was gratified, and my mother looked at the ticket through her spectacles, with evident satisfaction; and my father, such was his pride in Araminta, seemed pleased to have her receive the notice of men whom he knew to be respectable. There were two weeks in which to prepare. But what was there to prepare? Nothing; Araminta neither had a suitable dress nor the means to buy one. The next evening, there came a large package directed to my sister. She opened it, and a beautiful piece of blue gauzy stuff—zephyr, I think it used to be called, for that was before tissues and de laines were heard of—was unfolded. There was also a dress-pattern of plain dark brown silk, with everything needful for making them both up. No wonder the simple-hearted girl was pleased; she had never in her life owned such handsome dresses. I think now that the wisdom and discretion of our house were gone when Minerva left it; she

had checked Araminta's love of dress and admiration, and had, with her own strong-will, but gentle hand, guided and advised her. If she had been with us then, she would have said, "Don't make those dresses; keep them till you find who sent them, and then return the presents." Araminta, left to herself, went adrift. The dresses were made up, and she wore the blue one to the New Year's ball. How beautiful she looked in a dress whose hue became her fair complexion so well! She wore a kind of coronet of silver spangles—they were fashionable then—on her head; it had accompanied the dress. Mr. Truman came in his own sleigh, and escorted her to the ball. It soon became apparent that he was the donor of the dresses. He called often after the ball, which was only the beginning of a round of sleigh-rides and dances to which he accompanied her. His first gifts, too, were followed up by others—gloves, scarfs, satin slippers, waist-ribbons, and a beautiful fan glittering with spangles.

"I guess Tom Truman takes a fancy to your sister," said a schoolmate to me, as we walked home from the Seminary, one day, together. "But the town-talk, before your folks came here, was, that he wanted Miss Sarah Singleton, and that she didn't object; only she felt rather above him because his father is a livery-stable-keeper; but he's got rich at doing the business, and Tom is getting rich too, and so I shouldn't wonder if she made up her mind to have him after all."

Now, Sarah Singleton belonged to the very highest *ton* of U——, her father a bank-president, her brother a naval officer, and she was herself a very proud, fashionable girl. It was quite improbable that there was any truth in what my gossiping schoolmate had told me. I said nothing about it at home, where my books were my chief occupation, and where I talked but little. Two months later, somewhere in April, I think, when Araminta had seen nothing of Mr. Truman since the last cotillon-party of the season, and had appeared in low spirits from that time, our household was startled by the report that Tom Truman, the livery-stable-keeper's son, had married Miss Singleton that same April day. The story was true; my beautiful sister had served the base Tom Truman for a tool in effecting his purpose of making Miss Singleton jealous to such a degree that she had recalled her wandering admirer. He had not scrupled to engage Araminta's affections, and had managed it cunningly, too, devoting himself to her in public, and yet never making love in private. And it was only at

promiscuous balls and parties that he had introduced our duped sister, for in U—— we could not expect to be received as guests at private parties. He had presented her to none of the ladies, and had taken special care to avoid Miss Singleton. These things Araminta told my mother and me now, unconsciously revealing the infatuation that had led her on, and even yet unable to understand the depth of his wicked plan. My blood boils when I think of him. Truman's father was wealthy, and, though a plebeian, had advantages that perhaps were not to be slighted by Miss Singleton's family, who were rather impoverished by some recent financial difficulties of the bank. At any rate, Truman calculated rightly in attempting to create the impression that he had left her, and Araminta's superior charms completed the success of his scheme. That man has prospered to this day. He lives in a grand house, his wife is a stately lady, and his grandchildren sit on his lap. I sometimes wonder if he has ever repented; and when I think of the doom pronounced on those who do not repent, I am sure vengeance will overtake him at some time or other, and at some place or other.

It was at this turn of affairs that Araminta's evil genius, in the shape of Bill Dakin, appeared on the scene. He was handsomely dressed, sported a gold watch, told us he had a good situation in a forwarding-house at Buffalo, and was doing well. He renewed his suit to Araminta, assuring her that she only could make a steady man of him, and that, if she should refuse him, he might fall again into dissipated habits, and that, in fine, his fate was in her hands. Araminta listened, and was won. Her recent despair and mortification made her the more ready to embrace a prospect of happiness and of removal from the neighborhood of Truman's residence and the scene of his treachery. She believed that Bill Dakin had a good temper and the ability to support her in comfort, and that his attachment to herself would insure his future steadiness. Alas for the woman that thinks she can herself, instead of God's grace, keep a man in the right path. Araminta married Bill Dakin, and went to Buffalo with him the next July. Thence she wrote us that they had taken board at a fine hotel, and were "delightfully settled;" but after a few months we heard from her very seldom. The following spring she wrote us that they had hired a dwelling and were keeping house; and in June came tidings of the birth of a son. "I have named him for father," she wrote, "and hope he will grow up as good a man."

Deacon Ainsworth went to Buffalo that season on business, and came over to U—— to see us on his return. He gave a sad account of Bill Dakin, confirming all our suspicions. "He's neglected his business so much," said our old neighbor, "that they turned him away from the forwarding store. In the first place, they boarded at a dreadful expensive hotel, and Bill took to drinking very soon. He's a hand on a lake boat now; and it's a poor, shakly old tenement where they live. Araminta looks feeble, and the baby is a puny thing. You see I called on her. She didn't complain, but I could see for myself. She sent her love to you all, and said she would try to come and visit you in the fall."

No sooner had the deacon gone, than I wrote to my poor sister, telling her to come home and stay with us. In her answer, she declined doing so at present, and, with womanlike attempts at concealment of her troubles, said: "William is at work, and earns something for us, and I couldn't leave him alone now; he would miss the baby very much." But in two years after her marriage, Araminta did come back to us, the worn and faded image of her former self, and with a forlorn, half-clothed baby. Bill had died from the effects of a drunken fit and a deck fight. She had seen him buried with what scanty funds she could raise from the sale of a few household articles, and, with the help of some neighbors almost as poor as herself, had taken passage on a canal boat and come home. She made but slight revelations of the trials and miseries which she had suffered; it was not necessary; our own hearts and imaginations filled up the outline of her sad story.

My parents now began to show the marks of age. My mother's fingers moved less nimbly with her knitting-needles, and I was oftener called to share her household labor. My father worked less diligently, and the sorrows of his favorite Araminta affected his body and mind alike. But we lacked no comforts of living; for I was an assistant teacher in the primary department of the Seminary, and Minerva's aid to her utmost means was given us. We had not seen her since that rainy May night, more than three years before, when she left us to share Horace Sheldon's fortunes. Of him we heard an excellent report. He was in business for himself, and had gained a reputation as an honorable, upright man; and, moreover, Minerva had written us that, distrusting his own strength, he had determined to seek higher help, and had assumed the obligations of a

Christian life. After Araminta's return, in reply to my brief detail to Minerva of our unhappy sister's misfortunes, she wrote us to this effect:—

"Next spring, Horace is going into a larger house, and then we want you all to come and live with us. There is a room on purpose for father and mother. I wish my little girl to know her grandparents. Children grow up better for having old people about them. Belinda can have a nice little school close by; and Araminta must not be afraid of being in the way. She can help me with the family sewing, and Benny can share the nursery with little Hannah."

When I read him the letter, tears came into father's eyes; but he shook his head, and said: "It is too much for Horace to do, and I should feel out of place in that city; besides, I don't expect to stay anywhere in this world a great while."

His foreboding was true. He had a paralytic stroke, and died, very peacefully, the next March. Good Minerva braved the inconveniences of travel at that season, and came to us a week before he breathed his last. I cannot dwell on the sad scenes of that time. He wished to be buried beside his first-born; so we sent over to Sadaquada for Deacon Ainsworth to advise and help us. He came with officious but well-meant kindness, and, after the funeral, told us the little house was empty where we used to live, and that we had many good friends in Sadaquada who would be glad to have us return there. The deacon was a widower then, having just lost his second wife, and, when he spoke, he looked askance at Araminta, faded and ill, but still beautiful. But Minerva arranged matters better. She paid the funeral expenses, negotiated for the sale of such household furniture as we wished to part with, and made preparations to receive us at her new home in May. It was decided, however, as our mother seemed to wish it, that we should leave U—, and spend the intervening time at Sadaquada; therefore we shook the dust from our feet, and left the city in a week after my father's funeral, taking up once more our temporary abode in the little house where my sisters and I were born.

It was Araminta's last journey before she crossed the dark river. She had wept but little when father died. "I shall follow him soon," were her words. With a hectic flush on her cheek and a hollow cough, she took to her bed on our arrival at Sadaquada, and, when came the week fixed for our departure, she could

not sit up. She had lost all interest in life; her mind was not strong enough to endure the shock of her early disappointment and subsequent wretched marriage, and her child's welfare gave her no anxiety. "I leave Benny in good hands," said she.

We laid Araminta beside my father when the apple-trees were white and pink with flowers. I remember that I made a wreath of the blossoms from an old tree which grew near our kitchen window, and put it in the coffin, round her thin face, whence all the beauty but those soft, light curls that rested on her sunken cheeks had departed. Minerva could not come to us then—she had a new-born infant; but she sent us money, and the neighbors were very kind. Deacon Ainsworth and Mr. Holmes in particular helped us in a great many ways. Their families assisted us in packing, and, when mother and myself, with little Benny, had left the old house, they kept us among them till the last of June before they would let us go. Indeed, Deacon Ainsworth gave me to understand that I might always have a home with him; but I did not take the hint. I was too young to be a "ma" for his three big boys, and the Deacon was a little too old for me, when he was turned of fifty, and myself not eighteen.

It is nearly thirty years ago since we three took that journey. It was my first experience in travelling, if one might call such a trip travelling. We came on a canal-boat to Albany, thence on a steamboat to New York. My story is already so long that I will not weary you by an account of my impressions; nor, though everything was new to me, have I a vivid recollection of it all. It seems dreamlike in my memory now; yet one thing remains there fresh and green—the hearty welcome we had from Horace and Minerva. Among her surviving children and her multiplying grandchildren my mother lived ten years. We buried her at Sadaquada, where I have since visited the graves of my family.

As for me, Benny has always been my especial care. He calls me "mother," and is a credit to an old maid's training. He is married now, lives in the next block, and has two little boys of his own. After my mother was gone, I missed her very much; I never had a nearer tie. But Horace, the once convicted counterfeiter, "the prison-bird," has never been anything to me except goodness. His is not a Sunday religion; he acts it out during the week in good deeds; while my sister Minerva, by exercising kindness year after year, grows better and better. Their increasing wealth

does not take away from the majestic simplicity of her character. She teaches her children, of whom she has six, that an upright life is worth more than money. Horace, I must acknowledge, has one weak point; but who can wonder? We are sometimes visited by old acquaintances and friends from Sadaquada and the neighborhood. He is rather nervous lest they should betray the guilty secret of his youth. None ever have—to their honor I speak it. He says to Minerva: "A man is none the better for blazoning his former evil deeds, and making a merit of confession." But, occasionally, in private, Horace, who is not a great talker, will speak of old times, and remark: "Had you, Minerva, and your father's family spurned me then, I do not know what shameful end would have been mine. Don't talk, Belinda, of your obligations to me. To your honored father, poor man though he was, and to your good sister here, who stuck to me so closely, I owe everything."

I am useful and happy here—useful, I flatter myself, in a thousand ways to them all. My hair is gray, though Minerva, so much older than I, shows no frost on hers yet; but my heart is young. I never was a sentimentalist, and never, in the darkest hour of poverty or grief, said to myself, "Is it always to be so, Belinda Perkins? Are you doomed to struggle on alone, with no arm to protect you, and no

love to be yours exclusively?" I never had time for such useless thoughts, and have, moreover, observed that women protect the men quite as much as the men protect the women. My father could not have lived without my mother; she survived him ten years. And just think, there was my sister Araminta, deceived by one of the men, and really murdered by another; and Horace, although he raised Minerva from poverty to her present independence, could not have gained a fortune without her help, and is as much, if not rather more, given to relying upon her advice and wisdom than she upon his.

But see! the fire in the grate burns dimly; they will soon be home from the concert, and we are both sleepy. I shall never greet my fortieth birthday, for it is past, and I like my quiet position in the household—no cares, no fuss, loved and consulted by all; still, if that good-looking widower of fifty, who lives opposite, and who calls sometimes, and talks rather foolishly about his lonely state, and his girls getting married and leaving him, should take to discoursing sensibly and in a straightforward way, really I cannot say but that I might be tempted, notwithstanding Deacon Ainsworth once told me, when he was looking for a fourth wife, that "marryin' is a plaguy resky business," to do something very absurd. So, now, good-night.

MY TEACHER.

BY JULIA EUGENIA MOTT.

It matters not how the following chapter in the life of Agnes Crafts came into my hands. Here it is, in her own words, and, while I give you them, I wish that I could also show you the delicacy and firmness of the chirography, which forms such a striking contrast to her old, dashing, irregular writing. You would hardly think it possible that both came from the same hand. Agnes, the girl, and Agnes, the woman, are just as different.

He was my teacher. You are right in pitying him, for I was no better than the majority of scholars. Not that I was very disobedient, nor idle, but I was a school girl, and you understand what that term comprehends quite as well as I can tell you. If there is any being more mischievous than a school boy, it is his counterpart of the other sex. I attended a large boarding-school, where the pupils were divided into as many different cliques as the inhabitants of any aspiring country town, which has just succeeded to the dignity of an incorporation. Wealth is the universal alchemist which can transmute the base alloy of social inferiority into the pure gold of upper tendom, but we were not learned in its value then, and our distinctions were founded rather upon a similarity of the predominant inclinations than anything else; and I think that this is the reason why school-girl intimacies are so transient. A general agreement of thoughts and habits is not considered, and when the union of interests is broken by separation, the tenderness which has passed for friendship proves evanescent as it was bright.

When I entered school, I took my place, very naturally, in the circle known as "The Mischief Club." There were eight or ten members, and just so surely as any mischief was perpetrated, we were called upon for an explanation; sometimes when we were not guilty, but little we cared for that; if innocent, one might make a shrewd guess that it was rather from accident than design. Our principal was very lenient. We gave him no serious trouble, and he was wise enough to feel certain that, although coercion might teach us the appearance of docility, another lesson, that of deceit, would be its inevitable concomitant. So he took care that we

did not overleap the wide bounds he set for us; but within, left us to our own wayward propensities, of which the worst that could be said was, that they were mischievous.

Our teacher in mathematics, during the term previous to the one with which I commence this veritable history, was an old curmudgeon, (as some of the scholars were wont to call him very irreverently, taking care, however, that he was not within ear shot,) fast verging upon forty. Mr. Harney was not a very fascinating specimen of the *genus homo*, and if happiness has a beautifying effect, I am inclined to the opinion that he had never had his share of it, for I cannot well conceive how he could have been uglier. His tall, gaunt figure; his rough shock of sandy, unkempt hair; the keen, cold, gray eyes looking out from under his shaggy eyebrows with a glance not particularly edifying to unruly pupils, were all enormities which we could neither forgive nor forget.

In addition to them he wore large boots, and tramped across the room during recitations, making noise enough to deafen one. Strictly speaking, it can hardly be considered a crime to wear large boots when the feet will not admit of smaller ones; "But what business had he with large feet?" we asked, indignantly; and if his feet were large, and he could not help himself, "What business had he to come here and torture our sensitive nerves by his horrid tramping?" Influenced by these, and like cogent reasons, we tried and condemned him without judge or jury. I verily believe that he would have cowed a class of boys into obedience; but as it happens, in many contests, that victory is due rather to the weakness of the vanquished, than the strength of the conqueror: so it was in this. Mr. Harney had not the ability to conceal that he was half in fear of us; nor were we slow in taking advantage of the revelation. Superiority of position did not bring magnanimity. We gave the poor man some deeper experience of this "vale of tears" than he had ever known before. I shall not enter into any particulars. My young sisters do not need to have any more mischief put into their heads. What is inherent there will be quite sufficient for all needful purposes. Mr. Harney

did not teach another term. He went off in search, as I suppose, of some clime "where school girls never come." I hope he found it. I should be sorry to know that the "winged winds," or any other of the elements were so cruel as to answer, "None," in response to his piteous inquiry, as to the existence of such a place. We all joined heartily in wishing him *un bon voyage*; and Annie Pace wrote a eulogy upon his many virtues.

It was with a great show of valor, and some concealed trepidation, that we entered the recitation room, on the first Monday morning of the ensuing term. The professor's chair was already occupied. Mr. Graham was the very antipodes of his predecessor. A slender, well-formed man, with dark hair, slightly inclined to curl; a high, broad forehead; hazel eyes, calm and clear; a mouth delicate, but firm, the upper lip shaded by a moustache, he sat unmoved by any fear of the "irrepressible conflict" which we saw in the future. Opening his class-book, he called each name separately, looking up, as the answers came, with a steady glance, which precluded the suspicion of forgetfulness. More than one received the uncomfortable assurance, that she had not another Mr. Harney to deal with, while that grave eye searched her face. The first recitation—in algebra—passed off quietly enough. The lesson was well learned, and equally well recited. I cannot answer for Mr. Graham's impressions of his class. If he flattered himself that the morning's quiet was a prophecy for the future, he had yet to learn that the stability of his empire depended upon his own firmness of purpose; not upon the loyalty of his pupils, for such rebels are not to be subdued in a day. Already mutinous whispers were rife. After school hours were over, we all assembled for consultation, each feeling that our only strength was in concerted action. Single-handed we could do nothing.

There was no lack of speakers, in fact we had rather too many of them; three or four talking at the same moment, tended rather to confuse than otherwise. Our president looked on with commendable patience. She never liked to have her injunctions disregarded, and wisely refrained from issuing any, when the probability of such a result was as strong as in the present instance; comforting herself with the assurance, that whatever we lacked in prudence, was made up in fervor.

When we separated, nothing definite had been determined upon. We were all agreed, however, in thinking the new teacher worse than the old.

Mr. Harney had rough points sticking out in all directions, like so many porcupine quills, of which we could take hold. What if they did prick us sometimes? we obtained the final victory, and our scars were honorable ones. In Mr. Graham we could find nothing to condemn. He was gentlemanly in appearance and demeanor, destitute of any yet discovered peculiarities, without pretence or affectation, and, what was more provoking than all else, after that first searching glance, he troubled himself no more about his class than if they had been so many automatons, who could just recite a lesson and no more. Was not all this enough to make us, who were predetermined to dislike him, almost despair? Of course the trifling circumstance, that we had no reason for it, could not prevent us from carrying out our laudable intention.

The next morning some mutinous demonstrations commenced, which were promptly checked by Mr. Graham's quiet address. So the days passed on; the teacher holding his own by virtue of constant watchfulness, the scholars no less rebellious in heart, but acknowledging to themselves, their inability to cope successfully with a commander whose generalship was so admirable. He never obtruded his authority. The fact, that he was ruler in the recitation room, was one, which, once known, was indisputable for ever after, and why should he exert his power unnecessarily? Though its influence was silent, it was no less sure. All felt it, but none dared openly brave his displeasure. Something in the man's eye, calm, and even grave as it was, spoke of a latent force, which it would be dangerous to arouse.

For myself, I thought I had never so disliked a teacher; certainly I had never been so unhappy in any class. Scarcely a day passed, that some mischievousness of mine did not bring upon me the steady, rebuking gaze, which was worse than a dozen ordinary reproofs. It made me miserable, ashamed of myself, discontented with all the world beside, longing for something better than I had ever known; this was the mood in which I usually left the recitation room. As likely as not, before I reached my own apartment, it had changed into one of unmitigated rebellion against him, my teacher.

"I hate him," I said, on one such occasion, "he humiliates me, what right has he to crush me with the sense of my own unworthiness? How dare he assert his own superiority in that calm way as if it were beyond all question." I threw my algebra upon the table with passionate vehemence; it struck the inkstand and

sent it off upon the carpet. Ashamed of my weakness, I went humbly to washing out the black stains, feeling withal an uncomfortable impression, that the ink-spot was not the only blot, which that morning's passion had left as a memento, and alas! the other might not be so easily effaced. Then I sat down upon the side of the bed, thinking gloomily how miserable I was, and must be, so long as Mr. Graham was my teacher. What did I care whether he approved my actions or not? I asked. My unsubdued rebelliousness was quick to answer; it does not concern you, let him think as he will; nevertheless it *did* concern me, whether I forfeited the esteem of one whose regard was valuable as is that of any good man or woman.

My struggles always ended in a new declaration of independence; right was not strong enough to obtain a complete victory. Each morning found me in my class resolved to be myself again, but it was not so easy to execute as to resolve. My mischievousness was not subdued, but every feeling of rebellion was stilled while I remained in his presence. There he controlled me; his will was stronger than mine, but, however humbly I passed out when the recitation was concluded, it was only to experience, each day, a similar struggle between my increasing desire for his esteem, and the unfounded prejudice which I had cherished against one, the head and front of whose offending was found in the simple fact, that he was my teacher.

The ringleaders of our "Mischief Club" had, by this time, become tolerably well assured that the rod of empire had passed from their hands forever. They saw the handwriting upon the wall, yet they did not quite despair. "The prophecy *might* prove untrue," they said, in their doleful consultations; the end and aim of which was to discover some means of retrieving their late disgraceful defeats. Mr. Graham did not relax his vigilance. However quiet all seemed, he knew that, at any moment, the rebellion, quelled but not extinguished, might break out again. Of all the rebels none was more daring than Annie Pace; a slender brunette, intelligent, pretty, graceful, and winning; even amid all her mischief, it is a wonder to me now, how any man could have refrained from laying down his arms before her. In calmer moods, her eyes had the steady brightness of stars, but merri-ment overflowed in them first, then they danced, and sparkled, and flashed, as I am morally certain no other pair of eyes ever had, or could do since the world came into existence. Mr. Graham remained unmoved. His "Miss Annie"

was just as grave as his "Miss Helen," or "Miss Grace." His reproving look was in no degree modified, when her conduct called for it. If ever any teacher was totally oblivious to the fact, that his scholars were girls, young, and some of them pretty, that one was Ralph Graham. I challenge all competition with him in this respect.

One day, Annie wrote a parody upon a popular song, making our teacher the subject. It was as laughter-provoking as anything ever written: but so far as the justice of it was concerned there was none. That mattered little, however. Justice was a commodity in which, as you have surmised before this, we dealt as sparingly as possible; and Annie received her full share of applause from the select audience to whom she first read it; an audience, by-the-by, consisting of her room-mate, who, like Major Gahagan, might have reckoned herself as a thousand, when any mischief was on foot. The rest of us had heard exaggerated reports of its merit, and were all on the *qui vive*, but no opportunity occurred for its perusal, until we met for recitation the next morning. Mr. Graham was late, a very unusual circumstance with him, and we availed ourselves of the interval to become fully acquainted with its merits. At last he entered, looking rather pale and worn. I had the paper in my hand, when I heard his step upon the stairs, and, folding it hastily, slipped it into my algebra for safe keeping, until I could find an opportunity to return it to its author. I sat at the end of the class most distant from the teacher; and during the recitation he came around to see my problem, which stood upon the board ready for explanation. Some alteration was required, and, while making it, I inadvertently dropped the paper from between the leaves of my book. It lay for some moments unnoticed, until Mr. Graham picked it up and opened it to see to whom it belonged. He understood it instantly; his face flushed, and his lips were set hard together. For once the whole class was frightened. Nothing was said, however; he laid the offending poem upon his desk, and went on with the recitation as usual. We were all uneasy and ashamed. Never sound of bell was so welcome as the one which freed us from the grave scrutiny of his eyes. I was the last to pass his chair. He stopped me, and extended the paper.

"This fell from your book, I believe," he said, very gravely, "I had not expected it from you, Agnes." The slight emphasis upon the "you" gave me a keen pleasure, quickly swallowed up in the deeper realization of his dis-

pleasure. He thought I was the author of the parody. The mistake was a natural one; my writing was enough like Annie Pace's to deceive those familiar with both: besides, I had it in my book. I went to my room with a new load of humiliation added to that which I had already found so hard to bear; and bitterer than all was the certainty, that I might have had a different experience had I so chosen. I had willfully thrown away his esteem. Looking up at him from the depths of my own self-abasement, his virtues were magnified infinitely. In him I saw nothing to condemn; in myself nothing worthy of commendation.

All my rebellion was crushed out forever. I contrasted his patience, his gentle firmness, above all his justice, with the opposite qualities which I saw in myself. How unworthy I was, how blind I had been! I wondered at my own conduct; I heaped reproaches, bitter and unsparring, upon myself, finding a strange satisfaction in the punishment, which I could not have borne from any other. He was wise, and strong, and good, and I might have been. I felt the power within me. So it came to pass that I rose from my self-communing with better impulses stirring in my heart, than had been there for months. I had resolutely shut them out before, now I welcomed them. "I will be womanly and thoughtful," I said to myself, "I will show him that there is something better in me than he has yet seen. I will at least regain my own self-approval, if his esteem is forfeited beyond redemption." I did not see what injustice I did his character in this momentary fear, that change of conduct would not bring forgetfulness of the past. But exaggerating my own fault as I did, it seemed natural and just that I should lose his regard forever.

How eagerly I waited for the next recitation! I went to it tremblingly. Mr. Graham's manner was the same, with an added shade of coldness. There was no new assumption of dignity. That which was innate could not be disturbed by the ridicule of school-girls. His demeanor did not tend to lessen the immeasurable height to which he had risen in my estimation, nor was it any more efficacious in restoring my own self-complacency. I went from the class with a feeling of deeper humility than I entered it. The next day it was the same, and the next, and the next. So it went on for a week, until I could bear it no longer. I came to a desperate resolution; I would go to him; I would humble myself to the confession of my error; I would learn whether his esteem was lost. The thought

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that it might be, made it incomparably valuable to me.

One day I had passed his chair, and I suppose he thought I had gone down stairs with the others, but instead, I lingered in the recitation room. He leaned his head upon his hand with a sigh of weariness or dejection. The sound cut me to the heart. No reproach could have been half so bitter in my repentant mood, as the thought that I might have caused it by my perverseness. I retraced my steps.

"Mr. Graham."

He raised his head, the sad look not fading from his face for an instant, but his voice was unchanged from its usual grave tones.

"What is it, Agnes?"

My errand was a difficult one, but I was resolved.

"I'm sorry that I have given you such cause to be displeased with me," I said, very humbly.

He looked at me with a somewhat softened glance.

"Is it anything to you whether I am displeased or not, Agnes?"

The sorrowful modulation of his voice affected me strangely.

"Indeed it is," I replied, with a burst of tears.

"I know that you have had no reason to think so hitherto, but try me now." I bent my head upon my hands, weeping unrestrainedly.

"The past is all past, Agnes," he was saying, kindly; "only be what you are capable of showing yourself, and I can ask nothing more."

I lifted my face from my hands. "Of one thing, which you attribute to me, I am innocent. That parody, Mr. Graham, I cannot tell you who the author is: but I am not."

"I am glad of it," he replied; "but even if it had been yours, as I thought, the past should have been past just the same. I think I have more faith in you, than you have in yourself; I do not believe you know of how much good you are capable, but you will learn some day."

"You have taught me to long for something better than I have known, or been," I answered, hurriedly, not weighing my words, but speaking from the depths of my contrition.

"Do you know why?"

I was painfully conscious, that I crimsoned at the question, but if he had asked me the reason, I could have answered the one inquiry as readily as the other. I managed to stammer, "No."

He drew away the hands in which my face had again found refuge, compelling me to meet his eyes.

"It is because I love you; do you hear? I

love you; and thus loving, I see in you not so much what you are, as what you may become. Will you learn with me how glorious a true life is? I am but a beginner, also, Agnes."

He relinquished my hands; the room swam around me; everything became unreal, save the one figure, as he stood awaiting my answer. All else was uncertain; with him alone was safety, and strength, and peace.

I lifted my tearful eyes to his, putting my two hands within his own. "Will you teach me,

Mr. Graham?" This was my answer; but he thought it enough.

Ralph is leaning over my shoulder as I write. He says: "Add, Agnes, that the pupil has outstripped her master. It is I who should learn of you." I put my hand over the mouth which would say more cruel words, thinking with tears springing from a strange blending of gladness and humility upon the face to which Ralph bends his, "that he still sees in me, not what I am, but what he would have me be."

The Story Teller.

MY WIFE: AND WHERE I FOUND HER.

BY VIRGINIA F. TOWNSEND.

"I laid down my pen at last, and looked out of the window by which I had been writing assiduously for the last three hours—writing business letters to my lawyer in New York and my agents at the West, for I was now a business man, and a rich one—richer than I expected, when the news came, a month before, that my uncle, the wealthy old banker, had fallen into a sudden fit of apoplexy and died in less than twenty-four hours later, leaving me, the only surviving relative, the heir to all that wealth which it had been the one aim of his life to heap up, for which he had hardened his heart, and contracted and debased the best part of his nature, and probably bartered his soul, for was he not gone now where, on all lives dedicated to "money making," is written "Failure," total, irremediable? I thought of all this as I looked out of the window, that June morning, and saw the wide reach of fields and pasture-grounds, locked in by the hill, standing afar off in solemn witness. It was a delicious scene, fitly inaugurated by that most serene and beautiful day. Through the dark meadows, on one side, a small brook set its gray inserting, and soft winds shuddered through the rye and wheat fields, which were well nigh "ripe for the harvest." I had come here two days before, because my nerves had given me unmistakable premonitions that they must have some relaxation after a month's intense labor, which had kept them up to the extreme point of tension.

It was a little country village, in the southern part of Massachusetts, and I had selected one of the back chambers of the solitary hotel which it boasted, because of this view which opened from its side window. I was thirty-two that month, and leaning back in my chair, and looking out of the window, I gathered up the years of my life, and looked at them. I had had, on the whole, a happy childhood, and a glad, brave, struggling youth. My mother was a widow, and I was her only son. She was a true woman! I, her son, reverencing her memory, holding in my innermost soul every thought and association of her as something lovely and holy, beyond all price or naming, can think of no praise nor utterance which so completely and perfectly recognizes her character and life. She taught school, and sent me through college and my profession. Then her health failed her. Thank God, she never suffered. I had strength and courage to save her from this, but I could never defray her expenses on that journey which the doctors said would alone save her life. And to think that a few hundreds of all the thousands which I possessed then would have done this six years before, and that I might have had her with me that summer morning, her pale, sweet face, her gentle, low-keyed voice. I put the thought away quickly, for it made something rise in my heart which was like a curse on the dead. Once I had put down my pride for her sake, and solicited the loan of a few hundred dollars from my uncle, and I did this in the name of his dead brother and for the life of my mother, and he refused me—he, wifeless, childless, and so rich, and we his only relatives on earth. O, into what rocks and stones this greed of gold hardens the souls of men. Well, they have met now, and God be judge between them.

I was twenty-six when my mother died. She stood, for me, as the type and representative of all women. For her sake, I had unbounded faith in all, though I had never known one intimately. Of an artful, selfish designing woman, I had not the slightest conception, but I held all to be as pure in heart, as lovely in character, as noble, as true, as self-sacrificing as—my mother.

In less than half a year after she died, I met HER. She was the sister of one of my class-mates and to wonderful beauty of person, she united that grace of movement that rare fascination and vivacity of expression which make a woman so great a favorite with men. Larger acquaintance with the sex has convinced me that this style of temperament and character is most frequently associated with lax principles and impulsive, but shallow feeling, and that such women rarely fill up their lives with true and high and noble purposes, and that their beautiful impulses seldom condense into those fixed religious principles, without which all lives are mistakes and failures. Well, I worshipped Helen James. For two years there was no altitude of moral grace and loveliness to which I did not exalt my idol. I must tell the story briefly. We had been engaged for more than a year, when I began to have glimpses of her real character, of the petty social ambition, the selfish motives, the fitful impulses, and desire for admiration which governed it. Yet she loved me. All the best impulses of her nature all the romances of her youth responded to me, and as there were in her the elements of a rarely noble character, so there was a strong struggle between the good and evil in that girl's soul. My faith died out slowly—a death of such terrible pain, and struggle, and agony as it seemed to me, must totally wreck my manhood. She vibrated a long time between him and me—that distant cousin of hers, who had made a sudden fortune in California, and returned, and became enamored of her, as few men could help doing—few men, I mean, whose souls did not so recognize and reverence spiritual beauty, that no outward adorning of grace and loveliness could atone for the want of it. I saw how, day by day, worldly counsels and ambitions gained strength with her; how she descended to petty prevarication and injustice; how, one by one, moral barriers gave way before admiration and flattery, until I felt that she could never be, in spirit and in heart, my wife, and at last I said to her: "Go, and marry Helen James, this man who has bought you, and to whom you have sold yourself, and I shall never look upon you again till we stand face to face before the God who is to judge us." And I went out from her presence—that fair, false woman's—and down to the river-bank, and my faith was lost, and one thought only saved me from the sin and the shame of suicide—it was the memory of my mother.

So, as I said, my thoughts gathered up all these years, as I sat, a man saddened and disciplined by the experience of life, at my chamber window, that summer morning, gloriously adorned of God, and set in a golden arabesque in the heart of June. I wondered what I should do with all this wealth which had fallen to me suddenly, as in some of those old fairy legends I could remember reading at my mother's knee away up in the early child-mornings, and I said to myself, "What shall I do with all this wealth, I wonder? I have lived long enough to know the worth of money, all its limitations—all it can, and cannot do for man. And then I made some plans for the future, and devised various ways of doing good, and of blessing others with this wealth, and then I sighed, thinking there was no one in the wide world, who, loving me supremely and entirely, would rejoice in this fortune which had fallen to me, who would sympathize in, and stimulate my aims to bless others with it, and whom I could gather up close to my heart, and shelter the fair head there, knowing that it was the only sweet rest for it in the world, and I felt at that moment I would gladly give up all

my newly-gained wealth for such a one to love and to love me, to trust in with faith, perfect, absolute; and then I remembered my lost faith in woman, and I groaned out heavily over it.

I cannot tell just when I caught the first sight of her. I had done this probably, some time before I was conscious of it. She was a long distance off, for a pasture lot and a field of corn lay between us, but I could see her movements distinctly, and that her figure was small and slender; and my attention would have been attracted to her, if there had been any other human being in sight, or if my eyes had not gone wandering after my thoughts. She was washing under the great apple tree back of the little yellow story-and-a-half cottage. I could see the old bench, and the tub placed on it, and how the small figure bent over the board, and how she rinsed the clothes, and flung them into the basket on one side; and once I saw her pause, and press her hand quickly to her side, as though the work wearied her. Her face was too distant for me to form the slightest opinion of it, or of the girl's appearance, but I took a quiet satisfaction, in watching her, as she stood there in the deep shadows of that old gnarled apple tree, where the robins must have built their nests for a century, and then went on an undercurrent of thoughts in my mind, somewhat after this fashion.

"You add something fitting and pleasant to the picture, little woman, off there, doing your work so industriously over that washtub, with your heart full of the new birth of purity and beauty which is to come up from your toiling, and those snowy suds, which I used to be so fond of blowing into bubbles, filled with rainbows fair and frail as the rainbows of my youth. I wonder how wide a horizon of thought and feeling you have, little woman, toiling so steadily over that wash tub, and if you're the happy wife of some tall, raw-boned farmer, who has to bend his head every time he enters the door of that little old-fashioned cottage of yours, which, most likely, remembers in its silence the summers of the Revolution. You look young and slender, viewed from this distance. Perhaps, after all, you're a young girl who hires out in harvest, and works in the factory, winters, with your little hopes, and vanities, and ambitions. Well, keep to your work, none the wiser for my impertinent curiosity and if I do mine in life, half as well as you seem to be doing that washing, I shall be a better man than I am sitting here."

I saw her take up the basket of rinsed clothes, and spread them carefully on the line, and secure them by a pole fastened in the centre of the rope, and then she went into the house, just as the bell summoned me to dinner.

"Is Mr. Grayson in, this evening?"

It was a voice sweet, penetrating and refined—a voice which I knew at once must belong to a lady. I was in the back parlor of the hotel, when I heard the strange, soft tones syllable my name.

"Yes, ma'am," answered the waiter. "he's up in his room. Shall I call him?"

I was on the point of stepping forward and announcing myself, but the next words, hasty and a little agitated, arrested me.

"O, no, there is no necessity. I have brought home the gentleman's clothes. There are just two dozen, and if you will be so good as to take them to his room, he can settle with you."

I was so overwhelmed with amazement that I stood still just where I had risen from the lounge with the paper fallen at my feet, until the servant had gone up to my room. But as soon as I recovered myself, I entered the parlor, and confronted the person who had inquired for me, which I did with a good deal of reluctance, as she evidently did not desire an interview; but the waiter would be certain to discover my retreat, as soon as he ascertained I was not in my own apartment.

She turned her head as I entered, for she was gazing out of the window, and I looked for the first time upon her—the face of the woman who had followed me, dim and vaguely defined, through all the years of my youth up into my manhood, coming before me in dreams and in certain strains of sweet music, coming in its vesture of shining, snowy clouds, and then vanishing away. It was a delicate oval face, neither pretty nor handsome, and only beautiful when the spirit within rose up, and lighted, and filled, and enriched it. It was a face refined, suggestive, womanly, with rapid changes and reflections, with brown, deep, shy eyes, and hair whose color suited the eyes, with prominent, but delicate features, and a mouth that was what all true women's mouths should be—a sweet and perfect mirror of the soul. I drank all this in with that one gaze which I had of her, as she turned her face, a little startled, towards me, when I entered the room. My looks must have embarrassed her, for a faint fluttering of color into her cheeks first roused me to a consciousness of my rudeness.

"Excuse me, ma'am, but I heard you inquiring for Mr. Grayson."

"Yes, sir, I gave my message to the waiter." And it was no flutter of a blush now, but a burning tide of crimson which flooded her cheeks. She looked down, and I knew what a struggle was going on in that girl's soul. There was a quick flash of pain on the forehead, and a sudden compression of the lips; then she looked up in my face steadily, and said, in her soft quiet tones: "I have just brought home your clothes, sir."

The brave little woman! the real, genuine, fine-grained, lady! It was her turn to exult now, for I was more embarrassed than she.

"I—I was not aware that you"—I broke down utterly here, and I am not usually a bashful man, and I am certain that my nerves would not have been in the least disconcerted before an empress and her suite.

She saw my embarrassment and comprehended it. I knew that by the look of grateful recognition which flashed up in her eyes.

"I applied last week for the work, and the agreement was that I should return the clothes."

She spoke with a quiet dignity, which said, plainer than any words, "It is an honest work, and I am not ashamed of it any longer; and if you think the less of me for it, the disgrace is yours not mine."

I knew on what ground I was standing now, and drew out my purse.

"There were two dozen, I believe?"

"Yes, the whole amount is one dollar"—as quiet and self-sustained as though I was a dry goods clerk, and she a customer.

"I pay that for a single dozen in the city." I placed a two dollar note in her hand, and wished it were a thousand, though I should no more have dared to offer her this than I would a princesse.

"But we don't have such prices in the country"—fluttering the note in her fingers, which I saw were slender and small jointed.

"Well, the work is no easier in the country, and I never pay less."

She thanked me with her eyes and rose up. I went to the door and opened it for her. Just as she had got outside, she lifted up her face, that young, earnest, trustful face, to mine and said—

"Mr. Grayson, if you have any more washing to do, I shall like to do it for you."

She had triumphed over all shame, all false or natural pride. I knew it now, for there was no flutter in her cheeks or in her voice; the latter was low, sweet, and steady.

"Thank you; I will send you up some to-morrow."

I had determined to leave next morning, but my plans now underwent a sudden reversion. I watched her as she went down the road, and noticed her dress and figure for the first time. There was a singular fitness about both. She wore a lawn dress scattered with small brown sprigs, and a brown straw bonnet with a green ribbon gathered across it. She was small and delicately moulded, and her walk was rapid and graceful, not elegant.

She had just passed out of my sight, and I was watching the twilight which lay on the distant hills, as God's love overles our humanity, when the waiter returned. He was surprised to find me alone in the parlor, but I explained my interview with the lady, and learned through him, that she had resided with her aunt, an infirm old lady, for the last year, that she had come from the city, and taught the district school until it was broken up by the new academy, and he had been greatly surprised the week before, at her application for the washing of any strangers who might be visiting at the hotel. He was disposed to befriend her, because his sister had attended her school. "And she's a lady to be sure," he added, "though it's a dreadful come-down to take in washing."

She was a lady; therefore the "coming down" hadn't hurt her, I thought to myself, as I inquired her name.

"Miss Janet Mathews, sir. She lives in the little yellow house just at the corner of Moss Lane. You may have seen it from your window."

She was the heroine of my wash-tub.

"O, sir, I beg that you will excuse me."

"There is no need of it. You have grazed your arm." And I pointed to the delicate flesh scratched and frayed by the edge of the bar.

"That is no matter, but I might have broken it, if you had not caught me."

It was late in the afternoon, more than a week subsequent to my first meeting with Janet Mathews, that I came suddenly upon her at the corner of a field which opened out of a little belt of woods not far from her home. An apple tree, its branches laden with small, yellow, early apples, grew close to the bars of the fence, and she had mounted on top of these in quest of some the fruit; but she had only a precarious foot-hold, and would have fallen to the ground, had I not suddenly arrested her descent. I filled her small work-basket with the apples, which she was in hopes "Aunt Minerva, who was an invalid, might relish."

"No, I will carry them for you," as she put out her hand for the basket, with many thanks for my kindness. "I am very fortunate in having your company for the rest of the walk."

"You were, Mr. Grayson? with a quick up-leap of the shy brown eyes; and then I read the next thought which struck her—that I had called about the washing."

"I am an abrupt sort of man, Miss Mathews, and I will explain my errand at once. I have a friend and college classmate, from whom I yesterday received a letter informing me that he wished to obtain a teacher for the English department in the seminary of which he is principal. This is a rare opportunity for one who is disposed to accept it, as the school is located a few miles from New York, in the midst of most delicious scenery. My friend, his wife, and their half dozen teachers, form a company of highly-cultivated Christian people, such as one is not often thrown amongst. The salary for the nine months is five hundred dollars. It struck me that the situation might please you—at least there can be no harm in offering it to you."

"O, Mr. Grayson, how can I thank you!" She broke down here, and I let her cry softly.

I had three weeks before, visited my classmate for a day, and heard himself and his wife discuss the probability of a vacancy's occurring in the English department of their school. I was revolving in my mind some method in which I might serve my little heroine of the wash-tub, when this conversation recurred to my mind, and I wrote to my classmate immediately. He was under some obligations to me, and there was no difficulty in procuring the situation for Janet Mathews.

We had reached the gate of the little yellow cottage before she spoke again. "Will you come in?" And I knew that she desired it.

It was a little old fashioned parlor, corresponding with the exterior of the house, into which she ushered me. A dark grain carpet, a few chairs, a lounge, and a table strewn with books, were the chief features of the parlor furniture. We sat down here together, and talked just as if we were old friends. I learned her history in a few words. Her father had been a merchant, and the sudden discovery of his failure and business ruin through the rascality of his partner had occasioned his death. Janet was his only child, tenderly beloved and cared for, especially so, because she was the image of the mother whom she could not remember. The young girl was left entirely dependent on her own resources. She had come to her father's only surviving sister, whose husband had died a few years before, leaving her in declining health, with nothing but the little yellow-brown homestead which had sheltered his boyhood. I knew the rest of the story—how her aunt had gradually become a confirmed invalid, how the academy had absorbed her school, until, with poverty, well nigh starvation, staring them in the face, Janet had applied to the hotel for some washing. All this she told me, that summer afternoon, sitting with her sweet, earnest face looking up to mine, till the longing and the yearning to gather it up close to my heart was almost more than I could bear. O, Janet, Janet!

"And you are well pleased with this situation, and I may write to my friend that you will accept it?"

"I did not suppose that the future held anything so good in store for me; and now I can hire a girl to remain with Aunt Minerva, and go out into new life and work."

She said this more to herself than to me, with her hands lying in her lap, and her slender, small-jointed fingers fluttering in and out amongst each other, like young birds trying their wings for the first time.

"The term does not commence until the first of September, so you have more than two months of leisure on your hands, during which I should like to engage your services."

"As your washerwoman, Mr. Grayson? I thought that I was duly installed in that position."

And a laugh ran out of her eyes and gleamed about her lips, showing me what springs of light and gladness there were in her nature.

"But I wish with your permission, to change it. You have studied French?"

"Yes."

"And I do not even read it. Will you consent to take me for your pupil, twice a week, during the next two months?"

She hesitated and blushed, and an inward smile made a kind of flickering light and sweetness about her lips. But it was all satisfactorily settled before I left, and I was Janet Mathew's pupil after this—not simply in French though, for I think we did not make very rapid progress in this, but I was her pupil in that vast kingdom of emotions and intuitions of feeling and affections where woman's strength and glory lie, and where man's pride must ever learn of her humility. And so I came, unadvised and reverent, before the threshold of a true woman's soul, and, day

after day, new springs flew back, and I walked under stately arches, and through graceful corridors, and among trees hanging thick with gold and purple fruits, until I began to have some conception of the true measure and stature of womanhood. O, Janet, my little cottage girl, Janet Mathews! She had no idea of all she was doing for me during those long summer days, which are like great censers hung up in my memory, and sending their fragrance over all the years.

We had frequent rides and rambles into the woods, and here, sitting under the shadows of the forest trees, or near some little stream, whose crystal skeins were tangled and frayed by the stones over which they wound, Janet Mathews and I talked together. I see her now, her sun-bonnet on her lap, and restless fingers at play with the strings, while that fair, pale wistful face is looking up to mine, bright or tender, reverent or sad, as was the topic we conversed on, for we talked on every conceivable subject, from the scenery about us, the glimmer of sunshine, or the flutter of a bird's wing, and of the world, and the great and solemn problems which underlie all destinies of life and death, of things to come, and of God, in whose knowledge and love all things shall be made plain and perfected. But she was not always grave—my little country girl. There were quick currents of gladness and mirth in her nature, which flashed out more and more as her life took on fairer hues, and her low, running laugh would bubble over her lips, and the echoes among the hills would catch it up and toss it back and forth as though they loved it. She was full of quick impulses, but these had become living principles, and her character rested on a solid foundation of truth—truth in action, in heart. She was not perfect, but her life was nourished from the fountain of all perfectness—Janet was a Christian in heart and life.

It was an afternoon, among the last of the summer, when I walked into the sitting-room of the cottage in the lane. There was no need that I should rap, for Janet had caught sight of me at the open door, and two arch dimples, imbedded in either cheek, revealed themselves, as she welcomed me in her quiet, ladylike way.

"You see, Mr. Grayson, auntie has taken a notion that she will try her hand at some knitting, she's so improved of late, and I'm winding the yarn, under her inspection."

How pretty she looked, standing there, in her neatly fitting blue muslin dress, a new one, which harmonized with her complexion, winding the skein of blue woolen yarn which she had slipped over the backs of a couple of chairs. Her aunt sat in one corner—a drooping, mild-faced little woman, but thin and faded by care and illness. So I sat down in the chintz-cushioned arm chair, and chatted with both the women, and watched the ball as it grew in size and comeliness under those slender fingers, and the wind stirred the quince tree at the window, and the sunshine laughed along the corners of the low ceiling, just as it had laughed a century before, and the yarn ran in a swift current over Janet's fingers.

At last I said to her, "See here, my child, you will grow fatigued standing there, before you get through with the skein. Sit down, and let me hold it for you."

I had never addressed her so familiarly before, but, somehow, she looked so fair, and pure, and childlike with her delicate profile half turned towards me, and her face settling, every few moments into a puzzled seriousness over her ball, that the words came unconsciously to my lips. She did not answer me, only her eyes flashed up a moment in my face, and then filled with tears. She sat down quietly, and finished winding her skein, while her aunt told some story of an old-fashioned knitting strife in her girlhood.

"What is it, Janet?"

I asked her this question as we stood together in the front door, after she had finished her task.

"It was the name my father used to call me. I never have heard it since he went away. O, say it again, Mr. Grayson."

She was just like a child now, with that pleading face, which stirred my soul to take her up and fold her to my heart.

"Janet, I will say the words again, if you will call me once by my name—the name I have not heard from the lips of a woman since my mother died." She bowed her head, and I knew why she did not speak to me. I laid my hand on her hair, shining like brown meshes in the sunbeams.

"My child, my little Janet, may the Lord bless you, and cause the light of His countenance to shine upon you!"

There was a little silence.

"Nathaniel!"

It fluttered timidly out of her lips, and dropped into my heart, and the sound is there still.

"The sunshine is warm, but there is a breeze in the tree-tops, and it is cool off there among the meadows, under the apple trees. It is a shady walk, if we go round by the creek. Will you get your bonnet Janet?"

And Janet went.

We sat down in the long grass under the apple trees. A part of the field had been mowed the day before, and the air was full of the sweet scents of the crushed flowers.

"Isn't it delicious?" asked Janet, taking off her bonnet.

"Yes. Death often yields more sweetness than life. I said this to-day, in order to comfort myself when I remembered that only two days more of this blessed summer remained to me."

"Only two more!"

A quick start, a tone of deep regret emphasized the words.

"That is all, and I had a letter from my friend, the principal of the seminary to which you are engaged, stating that he should like you to be there the eighth. I cannot bear the thought that I must give you up my little teacher so soon."

"I shall have no more such easy teaching."

She said it sadly, and tremulously, too, as though she dared not trust her voice.

"I owe you more than I do all my other teachers, Janet. You have done me the most good."

"I, Mr. Grayson?"

"Yes, for you have shown me what a true, noble, self-sustained woman may be in all circumstances, because you have redeemed and consecrated life to me once more—because you have restored my lost faith in woman!"

Her soul rose into her face. "I cannot tell how I have done this, Mr. Grayson," she faltered.

"No matter; but now my heart is sad with the thought of losing my little teacher, I want to be her pupil always to learn daily new lessons of woman's grace, and truth, and loveliness, such as all men need, from her lips, and her life."

Her head drooped till her breath fluttered the dandelion blossoms she had gathered and strewn in her lap. I took her small, slender hands in mine. "Will you take me, Janet, to be your pupil, not for days, or months, or terms, but for life?"

And God and I heard Janet Mathews make a whispered answer.

"Nathaniel! Nathaniel!" she said, a little while after, with her sweet tones winding their caracens in and out of the syllables. "It is a soft, sweet, gliding name; how your mother must have loved it!"

And then I told her how I had seen her for the first time from my chamber window, that summer morning, three months ago, when I sat there under the burden of my newly found wealth, with no heart to be gathered into mine; no other life

added to my own, to enrich, and complete, and satisfy it; lonely, unloved, and rich; and I told her all my vague fancies and conjectures, as I watched her bending over her work.

"And you found your ideal over a wash-tub! What a terribly unromantic heroine!" And a laugh ran in merry gurgles out of her lips. But she grew serious in a few moments. "It cost me a struggle, a short, but a sharp one, though, to go up to the hotel and apply for that washing."

"My brave, noble girl, I know it most. But if you had not done it, we might have gone apart all the days of our lives."

"And you will take me, Nathaniel, you, so cultivated, fastidious, and almost a millionaire, me without a dollar in the world, and whom you found over a wash-tub?"

"And finding there my own lily, I was a richer man than all the gold in my uncle's coffers made me." I said this with her head lying on my shoulder, and her little hands crushed up in mine, while the day was going, with its golden feet, over the far off hills: going to meet the night.

At last we rose up and went home. Our hearts have been at home with each other ever since.

Little Janet is my wife now, and all she has been to me of strength, and rest, and healing, of grace, and refinement, and beauty, of truth, of faith, and of love, is it not all written in the book of His remembrance?—Godey's Lady's Book.

From Titan.

MY EARLY DAYS.

A TALE IN SEVEN CHAPTERS.

MY father died when I was three-and-twenty, leaving my mother, two sisters, and myself almost wholly unprovided for. It was a week after his death that we all gathered round the fire in our small, homelike sitting-room, to hold an anxious consultation over the future upon which we were entering.

My mother was the first to speak: "When I tell you, my dear children, how little we have that we can call our own, you will see that it is absolutely necessary that we should at once decide upon some plan for the future that will enable us to gain a livelihood, independent of the assistance of friends. We could none of us bear to ask for charity; and however warmly our relations may express their sympathy for us at present, I know well how soon affection and interest die away, even in comparatively warm-hearted people, when more substantial proofs of their feeling are required than mere words."

"But, independently of this, mamma," said my eldest sister, Madeleine, "why should we place ourselves in a dependent position while we have health and energy to work for ourselves? We are quite competent, thank God! and I am sure I do not shrink from the exertion that will be necessary."

"Nor do I," I observed; "but tell me, mamma, how much we have that we can call our own?"

"There is a small annuity of twenty pounds a year," replied my mother, "for which your father insured his life; and there are two hundred pounds in the funds, and a field that he bought last year, which may be worth some six or seven pounds a year."

"Say thirty pounds a year altogether," remarked Madeleine, "and this, of course, Augusta and Susan, must belong wholly to mamma, and we must start upon our own resources, which are health, and strength, and good-will."

My mother attempted to expostulate, but we tried to laugh at her for thinking it would be any use to divide thirty pounds between four, and Madeleine continued:—

"A school seems to me the pleasantest and most available mode of maintaining ourselves. I think there must be an opening for a ladies' school at Westbridge, and as it is only eight miles off, we shall still be in the neighborhood

of our friends, and likely to be able to establish a connection."

"I thought of a school, too," said Susan; "it would give us the happiness of living together, and also enable us to give a home to dear mamma."

"What do you say, Augusta?" asked my elder sister.

"It seems to me," I observed, "that a school is by far the best thing for you and Susan, but that it would be unwise for three of us to embark in the same undertaking. In the first place there is nothing that I can teach that Susan cannot teach equally well, and as, of course, you cannot expect many pupils at first, three teachers will be too many; and, just supposing the possibility of your plan not succeeding, we are all cast penniless again upon the wide world."

"What do you propose, then?" asked Madeleine.

"Why, I propose to seek my fortune as a governess. It is very true that I shall hate to be dependent, and often long to be at home with you all, but, nevertheless, I think it is the wisest plan. Three can live upon a smaller income than four, and, if I should obtain, a salary of forty pounds a year I shall send twenty to my dear mother, so that you will be twenty pounds a year the richer, and have one less to maintain out of your income."

"O my darling! How can I part with you?" said my poor mother, bursting into tears, and drawing me into her arms. "God bless you all for your unselfishness, and watch over you wherever you may go. But tell me what I am to do to assist you all?"

At first we refused to hear of her taking any share in our labors, but at length Madeleine, who perhaps thought she might find some comfort in feeling she was assisting us, suggested that the needlework department of the proposed school should devolve upon her.

"Mamma works better than any of us," she observed; "and it will be a great assistance if she will undertake to teach plain sewing, knitting, crochet, and embroidery."

Our mother entered eagerly into the scheme, and I saw immediately that Madeleine was right in making her an active participator in the work. We talked incessantly of the school, arranged the house that should be engaged in Westbridge, drew up a prospectus of the terms, and course of instructions,

considered which of our friends would be most likely to help us, and even decided what furniture should be parted with and what retained, and which servants must be dismissed, before the hour of bedtime struck, when we wished our mother good-night, with many kisses, and sanguine hopes that the future might yet prove brighter than we had anticipated.

"Come to my room to-night, Madeleine," I whispered, as we lit our candles in the hall. She gave a mute token of assent, and before my toilette was half completed, knocked at my bedroom door for admittance.

"The realities of life are commencing, Augusta," she observed, seating herself before the fire, and extinguishing her candle, as a practical illustration of the economy she intended for the future to practise.

"Yes, and the necessity for exertion has an exhilarating effect, that will carry us bravely on through the difficulties that may present themselves at starting. I want some advice from you, Madeleine, as to my own course in life. You think I have acted wisely in deciding upon an independent line of action, do you not?"

"Yes," said Madeleine, slowly, "I certainly do, on the whole; though I feel inclined to doubt how you will like the life of a governess, Augusta."

"Like it, I shall not; endure it, I will."

"But mere endurance will not be enough. You must throw your heart into your work if you intend to succeed."

"But surely the possibility of doing that will greatly depend upon the kind of persons I am associated with."

"Governesses cannot pick and choose," observed Madeleine. "You must not begin by expecting more than that the lady who engages you will be polite in her manner, and moderately considerate for your comfort, and that you will have liberty to carry out what you consider a right course of instruction with your pupils."

"I may, of course, expect to be treated as a lady."

"You can be a lady whether you are treated as one or not. For my own part, Augusta, I believe that very frequently the derogatory way in which governesses are treated arises as much out of their not realizing their proper position, as from any premeditated insult on the part of the family."

My proud feeling rebelled at this speech of Madeleine. "Their proper position!" I repeated; "am I to be in a lower position as a governess than the one I hold at present?"

"Certainly you are," said Madeleine. "It is obvious that the position of a dependent in a stranger's house, is lower than that of a daughter in the house of her father, supposing the father to be in circumstances and rank such as ours was."

"I don't think you should say 'dependent.'"

"Better face it bravely at once, Augusta. It is an honorable position if honorably entered upon, and if dependent in one sense, is far from being dependent in another. No doubt the world in general would consider you more entitled to deference if you kept up a respectable appearance upon the alms of your friends. If you could, by any contrivance, manage to have your door opened by a man-servant in livery, the world at large would hold you in high estimation, and not care to inquire where you got the means of clothing, feeding, and remunerating him. It is enough for them that you have got him. Now we know that we are going to take a far higher position in the eyes of God, by working for our own support; and surely, if we are quite certain of this, we need not disquiet ourselves about any minor considerations."

"I know you are right, Madeleine."

"It will be very much for your happiness, Augusta, if you reconcile yourself to the notion of occupying a lower position when you enter upon the duties of a governess. If you should enter a family where there are grown-up young ladies, you must not begin by expecting to be on a level with them, as you would have been hitherto. They will not like it, nor is it to be altogether expected that they should. You play and sing well, but you must not be surprised if the lady of the house does not choose that you should eclipse her own daughters. I do not say whether she is right or wrong, and with that you have fortunately not to trouble yourself. You have only to respect her feelings, such as they are. You may turn your accomplishments to good purpose by taking a second in a duet, when asked to do so, or by playing dance-music when it is wished for, and with this you must be content. Then, if you should be present at any dances, you must not put yourself forward to obtain partners, or feel

slighted if you obtain none. You will be most wise if you devote yourself to dancing with your pupils, or with any *gauche* boys and shy girls, who can get no one else."

"All this sounds very hard, Madeleine."

"Yes, it is hard, but every position in life has its hardships, and the lot of a governess is not exempt. You will say that I am still more hard when I tell you my advice to you is never to wear low dresses, unless requested by the family to do so. Many people would call this over-strained, I dare say, but by rigidly observing such points as these, you do not expose yourself to the slights and humiliations so many governesses complain of. It cannot be wondered at that mothers should desire their children to have staid, correct governesses, instead of pretty, flirting, dancing girls."

I could not but admit that there was reason in this last remark.

"Besides all this," continued Madeleine, "there is one point on which I have very decided opinions, and that is, that a governess must not indulge in thoughts upon matrimony. This sounds very cold and hard, I am quite aware; for if there exists one class of women more than another who would naturally look forward to marriage as the end of their trials and mortifications, it must be that of governesses. But I believe it to be impossible for a governess to do her duty by her pupils if her thoughts are constantly reverting to this subject. We all know that the matter that lies next our heart engrosses our warmest attention and interest, and if a governess' first interest is not given to her pupils, she must fail. After all, it is only the advice one would give to all sensible women. If Providence ordains that they shall marry, they will marry, without any scheming or manoeuvring, and they must be content to leave it in higher hands. Who can marvel that the lady of a house objects to keeping a governess whose chief object is to obtain a settlement in life?"

"You speak like an oracle, Madeleine."

"I have often considered the subject, and I cannot but believe, that if a governess entered upon a situation in a right spirit, she would be spared many a mortification."

"But you have forgotten one thing," I suggested; "am I to live without sympathy, and without affection of any sort?"

"My dear, you will have mamma and Susan

and myself to love you, and sympathize with you. It is not likely that any pupil could give you the affection that we all feel for you; and if you cannot succeed in meeting with it elsewhere, surely, it will be no great hardship to fall back upon our love? Few governesses are so well off."

"Dear Madeleine," I said, trying to laugh, although I felt sorely disposed to cry, "when I am with you, what more can I want; but your letters will only partially make up for my absence from you, and I feel that I shall crave for present sympathy."

"If God gives it you, well and good, dear Augusta; if not, be thankful for what he has given you. I dare say we shall each be able to write to you once a week at first, and that will bring you a letter nearly every other day. Now it is getting very late, and we shall none of us be able to afford to waste superfluous strength for the future, so good-night. We must never forget to pray for each other, for we don't know what difficulties and dangers may be awaiting us in our new spheres of duty."

I can recollect feeling an intense reverence for Madeleine as the door closed behind her, and for some time I sat thinking over all she had said, and resolving to act, as far as I possibly could, upon her advice.

CHAPTER II.

I WAS more fortunate than many young governesses in my opening career, for I met with a situation that seemed likely to suit me, in less than a fortnight. I applied for it, and obtained it, and found, to my great satisfaction, that the salary offered was higher, by ten pounds a year, than I had dared to hope for.

I wished at once to guarantee thirty pounds a year to my dear mother, but this she would not hear of, and protested against receiving more than the twenty originally proposed; we ended by agreeing that the sum should be divided for the present, and Madeleine insisted that if, at the end of two years, their school was in a flourishing condition, this annual gift should be lessened.

It cannot be supposed that I felt otherwise than extremely lonely during the long journey that carried me from my home to the scene of unknown difficulties and trials. I reached Cheverell Park late in the afternoon. It was a pleasant country house, without much pretension to grandeur or beauty, of which I felt glad. A footman ushered me into a small, back room, evidently kept for a waiting-

room, while he went to inform Mrs. Tower of my arrival.

It was some time before any one came to me, and I had begun to fear that I was forgotten, and had walked restlessly round and round the room, examining some old oil-paintings (that had evidently been discarded from gayer apartments), and striving to keep down my growing nervousness, and the pining for those I had parted from in the morning, when I heard footsteps approaching the door. A fair, stout lady, with much decision in her appearance and manner, and an entire freedom from embarrassment of any sort, entered the room, and scanned me completely, but not impolitely, at the first glance.

"Good afternoon, Miss Spenser," she said, giving me her hand. "I hope you have not had a disagreeable drive. You will be glad of some tea, I dare say. James, let tea be taken to Miss Spenser in the schoolroom immediately. You will take something with it, will you not?"

I hastily and shyly declined, having an intuitive perception that I was intended to do so. Mrs. Tower led the way out of the room, talking easily all the while. "You will soon learn your way about the house. James will show you to the schoolroom, and your own bedroom is the first door to the right in the schoolroom wing. I dare say your pupils will find you out before long. Let me know if you find any thing not comfortable."

I thanked her, and followed the footman up a side staircase that led to the schoolroom. It was a large, low room, poorly furnished, abounding in globes, desks, and maps, with two large bookcases against the walls. There were benches and straight-backed chairs, and an ancient sofa in one corner. A feeling of dismay thrilled through me as I recollected that this was in future to be my home. My eye wandered despairingly from the square, and almost threadbare, piece of carpet in the centre of the room, to the ink-besmeared table-cover and faded moreen curtains. For one moment I indulged in very sad and homesick thoughts; the next, I called to mind Madeleine's warnings, and turned my attention resolutely to the task of discovering whatever good points might exist in my future abode. The window was large and wide, and looked across a grass field, where many cows were feeding. In the distance I could discern a church tower, and the peaks of some hills, where the mists of evening were already gathering. I discovered also in my search after what was agreeable, that the sofa, though antiquated and somewhat soiled, was extremely comfortable, and if drawn nearer the window would make a pleasant seat, and a vision of a large crocheted anti-macassar floated through my mind, which might hide all de-

fects. In one corner of the room stood a very small, round table, which, when drawn close to the sofa, would be very convenient for books and work, and perhaps a nosegay of flowers. The bookcases, on inspection, seemed to contain many new and apparently interesting books, and opening one I read the name of "Margaret Tower," written in a free, bold, girlish hand. On the whole, I felt more cheerful when I had been once round the room, and discovered these redeeming points, and, bracing up my nerves for fresh disappointments, I turned to seek my bedroom.

I had no difficulty in finding it, as the door was close to that of the schoolroom, and I felt I had no right to grumble when I entered a small, though cheerful room, where, if the furniture was old and uncomely, there was no want of order or cleanliness. The bed-curtains of dimity were darned and patched, but looked white and wholesome; the narrow strips of carpet about the room left many a space of clean board, and the paper, once gay with many-colored flowers and leaves, had still a cheerful appearance, though the flowers had long lost their brilliancy. My box had not yet been brought up-stairs, so I presently returned to the schoolroom, where I found a tray with a metal teapot, and four or five slices of bread and butter. I was fairly hungry by this time, and had Mrs. Tower ordered me a more substantial tea, instead of asking me with inhospitable politeness whether I would take nothing with it, I certainly could have done justice to her hospitality.

I took my tea in solitude, and when I had finished, I drew a chair to the window, and occupied myself with a book. I heard a commotion in the house, as though a late dinner were preparing, and a moment afterwards there was a sound of footsteps on the stairs, and presently the door opened.

A young girl, of about fifteen, just entered the room, half dragging, and half pushing, two children of eight and ten, who shyly resisted her efforts. "If you please," she began, in a pleasant, girlish voice, "mamma told me to ask you to be good enough to take charge of Stephen and Flora while they are all at dinner. Don't be so silly, Flora," she continued, hastily, "let go my dress; I shall be back in a minute."

She disappeared as quickly as she had entered, without troubling herself to see whether I assented or not; and the children stood where she had left them, just inside the room, looking very shy and awkward.

I told them to come to me, and after a moment's hesitation they obeyed. Flora, the eldest, dragging herself forward, leaning against the table all the way; and Stephen keeping cautiously behind her, with his thumb in his mouth.

I checked myself when I found the involuntary question, "How old are you?" trembling on my tongue, and changed it into, "Was that your sister Margaret?" to which simple inquiry I obtained a low "Yes," from Flora.

"She is coming back presently," I observed; "and you are going to stay with me while your mamma is at dinner. Do you go down to dessert?"

"Yes," replied Flora again.

"And does Stephen also, or is he too young?"

"Stephen goes down, and Robert, too, but Louisa and baby are too young, and Margaret says she is too old, and she went to dessert."

"How old is Margaret?"

"Nearly sixteen, and she says mamma ought to let her dine late with Charlotte and Helen; but mamma says she went for another year."

"Your mamma knows best, of course," I replied.

There was a pause, and then I asked, "Which are your books? Does this belong to you?" and I held up one I had in my hand.

"No; that is Robert's; but I have some books," and she went to one of the bookcases, leaving Stephen standing alone, and looking forlorn, with his thumb still in his mouth.

I took him on my knee, and ventured to remove the thumb, and hold his hand in mine that he might not have an opportunity of replacing it. I failed for some time in my attempts to extract a reply from him, but he found his tongue at last, to contradict his sister from proclaiming an illustrated edition of *Robinson Crusoe* to be Robert's, when it was in reality his own.

Their shyness had entirely worn off before a great, noisy boy of twelve burst into the room, crying, "I say, now—where's tea? Flora, you go and tell Susan I'll just speak to mamma about her if she isn't quick with the tea. And here—I say—don't be in such a hurry—tell cook to send me up a slice of ham, or else a basin of soup. There's some just come out of the parlor."

When half through his speech, his eyes fell upon me, but he took no notice until he had given his orders, and then, in a shy, awkward manner walked up to me and put out a hand, saying, "How do you do?"

At this moment Margaret entered, bringing Flora. "You ought to know better than to be sending Flora into the kitchen, Robert; and you know as well as I do that mamma never allows you to have soup for your tea."

"I know that I've been out fishing all the afternoon, and that I don't intend to make my tea of bread and butter," retorted Robert, in a loud, rough voice; "and if Flora's too

lady-like and delicate to go into the kitchen, why, I'll go myself, that's all."

"And then Margaret will tell mamma of you," said Flora, in a sharp treble.

"Hold your tongue, you little tell-tit," was the rejoinder, and Flora received a somewhat smart slap on her shoulder, which made her set up a loud, passionate cry, without any tears.

"You dreadful children!" exclaimed Margaret, angrily. "Hold your tongue, Flora! Robert! do not be such a bad boy. You see what they're like," she added, turning to me. "I am sure I can't think what you'll do with them."

"I hope Mrs. Tower will tell me to-morrow exactly what she does, and what she does not, allow," I observed, thinking it more prudent to refrain from interfering with Robert, until I had had an interview with his mother. "Come to me, Flora, and leave off making that noise. If you were really hurt you would be crying, and there are no tears in your eyes."

Upon this remark Flora whined louder than ever, and made distressing attempts to draw a little moisture into her eyes. I turned to Margaret.

"My opinion is, Miss Tower, that there should be no tea for disobedient children. Therefore, if Flora cannot leave off crying, she might as well go into my room."

The howl gradually subsided into a whimper, which soon ceased altogether. Margaret rang the bell, and hastened the tea, and Robert presently returned with a basin full of steaming soup in his hands.

I expected to be asked to pour out tea, but Margaret seated herself quietly at the top of the table, and presently asked me with her mother's calm intonation. "You will allow me to give you a cup of tea, will you not, Miss Spenser?"

It was, indeed, an unruly meal. Margaret took a book, and was soon so absorbed in its contents, as to be quite cross when Robert sent his cup to be refilled. Flora and Robert argued, and contradicted one another all the time; and Stephen upset his cup of tea, and sent a long stream across the table, which trickled into Flora's lap.

From the insight into their different characters that I gained during that first evening, I decided that I liked Flora the least of all the party; but I was comforted by recollecting that she would be more completely under my control than any of them; and I had not much doubt but that, if once I made her afraid of me, I should be able to mould her to any thing I pleased.

"Margaret, just look at Robert!" she exclaimed: "he is soaking the bread and butter in his soup."

"Mind your own affairs, miss," said Robert, sharply.

"Ought he to do it, Margaret?" continued Flora, as her sister took no notice of her first appeal. "Wouldn't mamma be very angry?"

"Go and tell her," rejoined Robert, defiantly.

"He is taking some more sugar in his tea, Margaret," persevered Flora; "and you gave him two lumps, I know, for I saw you."

"Do be quiet, children!" exclaimed Margaret, without looking up from her book.

"Attend to your own tea, Flora!" I said, rather sternly. "You are younger than Robert, and it is not your place to find fault with him."

She began sipping her tea, muttering all the time that she knew mamma would be very angry, and that she should just tell her when she went down-stairs.

Now heartsick and weary I felt by the time Margaret rose, and told the children they had better go to the nursery and be dressed for going down to dessert. She did not appear conscious of my existence, but passed out of the room with her book in her hand, and in another minute I was left alone.

I must confess to having yielded to a momentary weakness then, and allowed the tears to fill my eyes, and an intense and most bitter yearning for home came over me; but I choked down the feeling, and, in order to drown thought in exertion, set myself to tidy the room. I can remember vividly now, how wretched the tea-table looked, covered with slops of tea, and broken pieces of bread and butter, and crusts that the children did not like. I rang the bell to have the table cleared, and when the servant appeared, requested to have my box brought up-stairs to my room. This done, I occupied myself for the next hour and a half in unpacking and arranging my things, and in trying to give an appearance of comfort to my room. I then returned with my work-box into the schoolroom, and worked diligently during the remainder of the evening. No one came near me again, and at half-past nine o'clock, being very tired, I extinguished the lamp, and went to bed.

CHAPTER III.

I AWOKE with a heavy heart the following morning, and with an impression that the trials of governess-life in theory were far less formidable than they promised to be in reality. The sense of entire loneliness and isolation was depressing in the extreme, and I shed a few bitter tears as I recollected that but four-and-twenty hours previously, I had been dressing in my own room, and preparing to join my mother and sisters at the breakfast table.

Happily I had time to recover my composure, and form a few good resolutions, before a servant knocked at my door, with the information that the prayer bell had just rung. I followed her down stairs into a cheerful and handsomely furnished room, where the breakfast lay on the table, and all the family were gathered together. They must have sent to summon me, for the servants were already waiting outside the door, and the moment I entered Mrs. Tower just gave me her hand, and immediately pointed to a chair at a short distance from her. The servants entered, and we had prayers, and when they were over, I made the discovery, perhaps with some feelings of satisfaction, that we were all to breakfast together.

Mr. Tower, who was a stout but amiable-looking gentleman, shook hands with me, and hoped I was not tired with my journey the previous day; Margaret gave me a familiar nod, with an accompanying "good-morning," but her elder sisters seemed to think it was not incumbent upon them to address me, as their mamma had not gone through any form of introduction, and one busied herself with making the tea, while the other cut some bread, and complained that the eggs were always cold. They were elegant girls, though not exactly pretty, and had all their mother's self-possession and ease of manner.

I took a modest seat at the bottom of the table, with Flora and Robert one on each side of me. A dish with slices of bread upon it was passed to me, and Robert made bold to help me to some butter. Some minutes passed, during which Mrs. Tower and her daughters kept up an animated conversation, and then Miss Tower looked down the table and said, "Robert, ask Miss Spenser whether she takes sugar and cream."

I could not help thinking the inquiry might as well have been addressed to myself, but since it came through Robert, it was to him I gave the answer, which was immediately shouted to his sister in a concise form: "Cream, but no sugar."

Presently, Mr. Tower laying down his newspaper, came to the breakfast table, and turned kindly towards me, to see whether I wanted any thing.

"Wont you take an egg, Miss Spenser—or a slice of tongue?"

The same intuitive feeling came over me, that had done the night before, warning me it were wiser to refuse, and I accordingly did so. Robert stretched across the table for a glass of marmalade, and sticking a spoon into it, observed,—

"Wont you have some marmalade, Miss Spenser? It's precious jolly stuff, I can tell you."

I again declined, and he emptied the spoon

to his own plate, causing Flora to call her mamma's attention to the fact. "Mamma, Robert has got marmalade and butter, and you don't allow him to have both, do you?"

"Robert, leave that glass alone," said his mamma, sharply.

"Nasty little Tell-tale?" muttered Robert, across me to his sister.

"Robert is calling me names, mamma," whined Flora.

This time no notice was taken, and Robert proceeded to level further *sotto voce* abuse at his sister, which I, in vain, endeavored to check. It ended in Flora's making a second appeal, and Robert's being ordered to leave the room. To my surprise he took no notice of the command, but continued to eat his bread and butter and marmalade with great composure, reserving his revenge for another time, and his mother took no further notice of him.

Breakfast concluded, I felt that I was expected to leave the room, but the extreme unpleasantness of beginning the day without any advice from Mrs. Tower, or the slightest intimation of her wishes with regard to her children's training, pressed upon me so forcibly, that I resolved to overcome my disinclination to address her, and be the first to broach the subject. I did so as modestly as I could.

"I should be much obliged if you would allow me to have a few minutes' conversation with you, before entering upon my duties."

"Of course, of course, Miss Spenser," she replied, hastily. "You will see me in the schoolroom long before the books and maps are put out."

I took the hint and left the room. In the schoolroom I found Flora seated on a cushion, with a doll in her lap, and a heap of doll's clothes by her side. As I felt it would be far better that none of the children should be present during my interview with Mrs. Tower, I desired her to carry her doll into the nursery, and remain there until I sent for her. She complied unwillingly, and I turned my attention to the lesson books, that were tossed away in sad confusion in a side cupboard.

More than half an hour elapsed before I was joined by Mrs. Tower, but the interval gave me leisure to consider what it would be best for me to say, and I did not regret it. As soon as she entered, she commenced at once by going through the list of books her children had been in the habit of using, mentioning some as not desirable, and suggesting others to be used in their stead. From solid acquirements she went on to accomplishments, and concluded by saying that it was her wish that I should superintend Margaret's studies, and see that she was well pre-

pared for the masters who came over twice a week from the neighboring town to give her lessons.

"Would you, ma'am, be kind enough to let me know exactly the footing on which I am to stand with Miss Margaret?"

Mrs. Tower hesitated for a moment. "Well, Miss Spenser, I must leave a great deal to your sense and discretion. Margaret is getting rather old for the restraints of the schoolroom, but is still too young to give up her studies, and go out with her sisters and myself. I wish to keep her in the schoolroom for at least another twelvemonth, and I look to you to make it as little irksome for her as you can contrive."

I felt uneasy at this indefinite position. "I conclude that I shall be at liberty to exert my authority in the schoolroom, whenever I feel it right to do so," I observed.

"Yes," replied Mrs. Tower, looking rather uncomfortable. "Of course, you must do what is right, and I feel sure Margaret will be reasonable; but I trust to you not to be too exacting."

"And with regard to Robert," I began.

"Oh! Robert goes to the grammar school, and will only be upon your hands at tea-time, and at the early dinner when we have visitors in the house."

"And at such times you wish me to make him do what is right, and keep order and peace in the schoolroom?"

"Yes, certainly," and Mrs. Tower laughed. "He is an unruly spirit, but a fine, generous-hearted boy at the bottom. With all his faults, you will be sure to like Robert."

"I think I shall," I replied, and the mother looked pleased.

"And may I, ma'am, request of you before you leave," I continued, "that if any thing in my teaching or conduct should not give you satisfaction, you will at once speak to me upon the subject. Misunderstandings so often arise from conversations being carelessly repeated, or actions misinterpreted, that I should feel much relieved if I could be sure that I should hear of your disapproval at once from your own lips, and have an opportunity, if I possessed the power, of at once justifying myself."

"Oh! yes, yes, Miss Spenser; I am a candid person, and always deal as I like to be dealt by. We shall get to understand each other in time, I don't doubt. I wanted also to say to you that when we are alone it is our wish you should dine down-stairs, with the children, at one o'clock, but when we have company we should feel much obliged by your superintending their dinner here, and keeping them as quiet as possible."

I assented, and Mrs. Tower left the room; and after dwelling on the interview for a few

minutes, and reflecting that it was not as satisfactory as I could have wished, I went in search of Flora, who was still in the nursery, which I found to be a pleasant, airy room, at no great distance from the schoolroom.

The morning slipped quietly away, with only Flora and Stephen to teach, and I was surprised when I found it was already half-past twelve o'clock. I rose and told Flora to put away the books, giving her a lesson in order, and showing her how to class them; and I observed that I should always hold her responsible for their neatness, as Stephen was too young to take charge of them. I then sent them to the nursery to be prepared for the early dinner, while I went into my bedroom to make my own hair smooth.

I had seen nothing of Margaret since breakfast-time, and I felt very reasonably annoyed at the dubious relation in which I stood to her. An opportunity for a more definite understanding might occur at dinner-time, and if so I resolved to make the most of it.

The early dinner was a disorderly meal. There was boiled mutton and rice pudding for the children and myself, and some pastry and fancy dishes for those who were making a luncheon. Mrs. Tower sat at the top of the table, and her daughters wandered in and out, while Margaret seemed to make a point of steadily ignoring me, and imitating her sisters as far as lay in her power.

I felt my position to be a critical one. Mrs. Tower evidently wished to gain her point without exercising any absolute authority. She desired that the task of making Margaret attend to her studies should fall upon me; and I instinctively felt that, if I rendered myself offensive to Margaret, my residence at Cheverell Park would be a short one. I puzzled myself during the whole of dinner-time with trying to resolve what course would be the wisest to pursue, and felt as little able to decide at the end as at the beginning. Feeling, however, that I must either make a move now, or relinquish the idea altogether, I addressed myself to Margaret.

"Your mamma tells me, Miss Margaret, that she wishes me to superintend some of your studies, and I should be glad if we could come to some arrangement with regard to hours."

"Oh! I don't feel inclined for any thing of that sort to-day," said Margaret hastily, while Mrs. Tower appeared absorbed in a letter. "You will see me in the schoolroom sometime to-morrow, Miss Spenser."

"I only wish for some kind of definite understanding," I observed, resolutely; "that when we do begin, we may begin with some sort of method, and that I may arrange the children's lessons accordingly."

"It depends so much upon circumstances," began Margaret.

"But I dare say you can give me some idea as to when I may expect to see you, either in the morning or the afternoon, for instance."

"Well, but sometimes I walk in the morning, and sometimes in the afternoon; it all depends upon the weather and upon visitors."

I hesitated, and looked at Mrs. Tower, feeling that, come what would, I was resolved not to be kept in such an uncertain and humiliating position. If my duties were not to be clearly defined, it would be better not to enter upon such an unpleasant post, the result of which must be that all parties would be dissatisfied with one another. I knew that I was asking for no more than my right, and that I determined to obtain.

Mrs. Tower at length responded to my appealing look. "You must be a little more definite, dear Margaret. It will be a serious injury to Flora if Miss Spenser cannot arrange her lessons systematically. It is only for a twelvemonth, and if any thing particular should occur, you can easily take a holiday you know, for once in a way."

Margaret looked annoyed. "It is very unreasonable, mamma, keeping me in the schoolroom at all at my age. Louisa Morton is a month younger than I am, and she is not to return to school again. Mrs. Morton said the other day that she thought it very good for young girls to mix a little in private society for a twelvemonth or so before they come out; it gives them confidence and lady-like manners."

"I don't profess to agree with Mrs. Morton on every point," said Mrs. Tower, evidently anxious to close a discussion to which I was an unwilling listener. "Come, Margaret, dear, Miss Spenser is waiting."

"Well, I suppose, in future the afternoon will be most convenient to me," said Margaret, in a cool and dignified tone. "I shouldn't choose to spend the morning in the schoolroom, when Charlotte and Helen are always at home. In the afternoon they are generally out."

"And what hours?" I said resolutely.

"Oh! I can't tie myself to half an hour. About three, or half-past, I dare say; but I don't think I shall begin this week."

I felt not a little provoked, but I forbore to press the point too far, and with the observation, "Then I shall expect you on Monday afternoon, Miss Margaret," left the room.

I doubt not that Margaret passed her opinion very freely on me after I left, and at the time I was much annoyed at the idea; but I have since had reason to think that Mrs. Tower respected me none the less for wishing to ascertain my duties before entering upon them.

The afternoon I had to myself, and I spent it in writing a long letter home, in which I

felt it most wise and kind to keep out of sight my trials and vexations, and to enlarge upon all that I had been able to discover likely to conduce to my happiness. My mother and Madeleine, in rejoicing over the cheerful tone in which it was written, little guessed how many large tear-drops fell on the blotting-paper by my side, as I recalled their dear faces, and alluded to many things associated with home. And so it is best; every mortal has his own share of sorrow, and it is the first duty of those who love, to refrain from adding one burden to the many that are already weighing down to earth the spirits of those they love.

At six o'clock Flora and Stephen came to the schoolroom for their tea; and as I consider punctuality to be one of the first duties of a governess, whether as regards practising it herself, or enforcing it upon others, I rang the bell, and tea was almost immediately brought by the under-housemaid, a good-tempered country girl, who had not long been at the Park. I made the tea and cut the bread and butter before Margaret and Robert appeared; and I had also time to warn Flora that I should not allow any interference on her part with Robert, as their mamma had given me authority over both. Margaret came in with her book in her hand, and placed herself before the tea-tray, and I seated myself at the opposite end of the table. All was peaceable until Robert appeared, and then the discussion of the previous night recommenced.

"Flora, go and tell cook to send me up some soup or a sandwich."

"Mamma doesn't allow you to have soup," began Flora.

I laid my hand on Flora's shoulder to check her, and observed, "I cannot allow you to fetch things from the kitchen without your mamma's permission, Robert."

He stared, and then said, "But she doesn't mind a bit. She has known me have it over and over again, and said nothing. It is only that spiteful little thing!"

"Well," I said good-temperedly, "I will ask her to-morrow, and if she gives you leave, well and good. But I am sure you will not get any thing to-night, because it will put me in an uncomfortable position."

"I had hardly any dinner," observed Robert, apologetically.

"I am very sorry," I said sincerely. "Perhaps, if your mamma knew that, she might give you leave to have something with your tea. At all events, Robert, I will cut you as much bread and butter as you like."

He made a face at the proffered fare, but took a thick slice which I offered him, and ate it with good-humor, at the same time asking Margaret if they might all have some

jam. She gave consent, and produced the key of a cupboard in the schoolroom, where some jam was always kept, with tea and sugar, and a few other groceries.

"Please, some more bread," said Flora presently.

"You have not finished what I gave you yet," I replied, resolved not to countenance waste of any description.

"I don't like the crust," said the whining voice.

"You must learn to like whatever is given you, my love," I said. "When I was a child I was never allowed to say what I liked or disliked. If I would not eat what was given me, I was forced to go without."

"Margaret never eats crusts," persevered Flora.

"Your sister does as she likes," I replied, "but you must do as I tell you. I cannot give you any more bread until that is eaten."

Perceiving that I was determined, Flora yielded, and presently the crusts had disappeared. On the whole we had a much more quiet and orderly meal than the preceding night, and Margaret seemed sensible of the fact, for on leaving the room she observed, "I am glad you are here to keep them quiet, Miss Spenser. The schoolroom has been like a bear-garden ever since Miss Williams' left."

I spent a tolerably happy evening, reading a little, and embroidering a collar that I destined for a birthday present to Madeleine. I cannot say that I felt less lonely, but I certainly felt less unsettled, and began to have hopes that when I had made myself a definite position in the house, and taught the children to be obedient, I might become moderately comfortable; and there was at least great satisfaction in knowing that, so far from being a burden upon those at home, I was likely to be able to render them some assistance. The thought that I was working for my dear mother, as well as myself, bore me up then, and has often done so since, in times of difficulty and depression.

CHAPTER IV.

A FEW weeks saw my position at Cheverell Park more clearly defined, and infinitely pleasanter than I had at first dared hope it could ever be. When Mrs. Tower had ascertained that I was steady and regular, and bent upon fulfilling my duties, she appeared content to let me carry them out very much in my own way. Her elder daughters discovering that I had no wish to force myself into notice, or to aspire to any unbecoming rivalry with themselves, treated me with less *hauteur*; and finding that I never presumed, ceased to think it necessary to remind me by look or tone that I was in a position inferior to theirs. Mr. Tower was kind and friendly,

but took little notice of me, and gradually I sank into a quiet, unobtrusive place, going about my own duties methodically, and allowing other people to go about theirs, in a way that I now believe is the only plan by which a governess can insure kind and civil treatment, and a peaceful life, in any family constituted like that into which my lot had fallen. Of course, there was not a day, or an hour, in which I did not feel strongly, and sometimes bitterly, that I was but a governess; yet, by having resolutely faced the fact from the first, I found that it was not unendurable, and I rested upon the certain conviction that if God saw fit, he would release me from the state of dependency as soon, and in the manner that he deemed wisest.

I think now, that I did not at the time fully realize how greatly I built upon this conviction. It was a never-failing source of strength and comfort to me. It bore me up through every vexation and soothed the feelings of depression and despair that at times visited me. It brought me peace in many a wakeful hour of the night, and gave a hopeful tone to the letters I wrote home. I do not think it was a wrong feeling; I am more inclined to believe that it was sent in mercy, to give me strength to bear up beneath the trials of the new and strange life.

With my pupils I had not much trouble. In less than a week Flora and Stephen were wholly under my authority, and I think it was a sensible relief to the rest of the household as soon as this was the case. I found very little in Flora to attach myself to, and many sly actions, and much falsehood and deceit, that only time could be expected to eradicate; but she was a clever girl, and I took an interest in pushing forward her studies, and developing her talent for music, which was considerable. I did not think her faults hopeless, and some slight symptoms of amendment soon gave me encouragement to set my mind diligently upon improving her morally, as well as intellectually.

Stephen was, I think, a little dull, and certainly not a little obstinate. Sometimes he resolutely refused to learn, and would pretend to be unable to spell words of three letters. Threats and ordinary punishments had no effect whatever upon him. He never cried, but stood sullen, with his thumb in his mouth, and might have been deaf and dumb and blind to judge by the stony indifference he assumed. I bore this patiently for some time, constantly hoping for some signs of amendment; but when none were forthcoming, I appealed to Mrs. Tower, and obtained her permission to make him dine alone in the schoolroom, whenever one of these obstinate fits was upon him; and as I only allowed him sufficient fare, of the simplest description, to satisfy ac-

tual hunger, and he not unfrequently at these times heard of the jam-tart or apple-dumplings that Flora and Robert had been enjoying, the result soon proved the scheme to have been successful. The sullenness came at longer intervals, and was of shorter duration each time, and I felt very grateful to Mrs. Tower for allowing me to take these measures for his improvement.

Robert was my friend from the commencement. I never had any difficulty in controlling him; and the cause of dispute at the tea-table was happily settled by his mamma giving me discretionary power to send to the kitchen, for an egg or a sandwich for him, whenever I judged that there was ground for the request. I was surprised and pleased to find how readily he bowed to my decision, and with what good-humor he ate his bread and butter, when I found it necessary to refuse a petition for something more savory. I had a good deal sometimes to put up with from his noisy, boisterous ways, and endured a few rather unpleasant practical jokes; but there was so much to like and admire in his character, and so many acts of rough kindness to atone for his mischievous pranks, that I found it easy to overlook them, and laugh off any little annoyance I might feel. I am sure I rose high in his estimation in consequence, and suffered less from his love of teasing than any person would have done who had resented the playful offence.

Perhaps Margaret was my greatest trouble. While she merely paid me the compliment of studying with me for a short two hours every day, going through her various occupations in a brusque, business-like way, we got on well enough, and I found nothing of which to complain. But the time unhappily came when it pleased her to adopt a more familiar tone; when the visits to the schoolroom were not looked upon as a necessary evil, and when, instead of settling instantly to work, she chose to begin with a little gossip, to indulge in a little more between each employment, and perhaps to spend half an hour gossiping when the studies were over. I wished to check this propensity in her, but found it more difficult than I imagined, without giving her serious offence, which I was loath to do. There was so little in common between us that we could talk about, that the gossiping propensity soon led her to chatter about affairs in which I had no concern, and on which I would as soon have been ignorant. It was far better for me that I should not know that Helen Tower had a *penchant* for Captain Rymer, and that Mrs. Tower disapproved of it, and tried in every way to cross it, because Captain Rymer was of no family, as Margaret worded it, and not particularly well off. I had the uncomfortable conviction that if it

ever transpired that such a secret had been poured into my ear, Mrs. Tower and her daughters would be very reasonably annoyed, and my relation towards the whole family would undergo a change. I could only beg Margaret not to tell me such things, and always endeavor to change the conversation. Beyond this I did not know what to do, and since it had no effect in stopping Margaret's tongue, I heard many a family detail that was never intended for my ears.

But what annoyed me even more than this was, that however friendly and confidential Margaret might be to me in the schoolroom, her manner changed the instant she set foot in the dining-room; for in the presence of her mother and sisters she was as dignified and haughty and overbearing as ever. I was greatly stung and wounded by this at first, but by degrees I grew callous to it, and rendered myself proof against any annoyances by showing her that, however it might please her to lay aside the dignified young lady when it suited her convenience, yet that I never, in her most lively and sociable moments, forgot, or appeared to forget, that I was in deed and in truth a governess. Consequently, I did not feel humiliated when her manners showed me that she was fully conscious of the fact; and thus I am convinced that I saved myself incalculable suffering, and much of that insolence and overbearing of which governesses of the present day so bitterly complain.

I had been at Cheverell Park about six weeks, when Margaret came into the school-room one sunny afternoon, and asked me to take a walk with her.

"Charlotte and Helen are gone out with mamma in the carriage," she observed, "and I can't settle in to work this lovely afternoon. We shall have time for a long ramble by the river, if you will come."

I consented, making it a proviso that Flora should accompany us, for I always strove to bear in mind that Flora was essentially my charge, and made a point of never neglecting her even to oblige Margaret; and more than once I had found her, in some slight degree, a protection against Margaret's heedless tongue.

"Oh, no! I can't have Flora to-day," exclaimed Margaret; "she is such an incessant worry, and I have got a great deal I want to talk to you about."

Of course, this information only served to make me more bent upon taking Flora, and Margaret was obliged to yield.

It was an exquisite afternoon in early spring, and I felt my spirits rise as we crossed a stile, and strolled along the soft grass by the side of the clear, sparkling river. The banks were covered with rushes and wild flowers, and but-

terflies and bees hovered over them, telling a delicious tale of the summer that was coming. I would gladly have given myself up to the enjoyment of nature, but this Margaret would not allow. Her tongue was already in full swing.

"So mamma yielded at last, and said she would give a dance, a regular large dance, almost a ball, with all the rooms thrown open; one for refreshments, and one for cards (where all the old, stupid people may congregate together, and be out of the way), and the others for music and dancing. And as it is a home party, and there will be some young people asked, I am to join it, of course; and mamma is going to get me a dress something like my sisters', only rather simpler, because, you know, I am not come out. Theirs are white tulle, with wreaths and sprays of small, white, cluster roses; and I am to have bows of white ribbons instead of flowers, and some pearls in my hair, to look more juvenile, as mamma says; and all the dresses are to come from London. There will be more than a hundred people, if all come, and there is to be a band from Bayford. Wont it be delightful?"

"I dare say it will. I hope you will enjoy yourself."

"And you are to come too. You didn't expect that, did you? They held a consultation about it down-stairs. Charlotte was against your coming, but papa and mamma were for it; and mamma said you were so extremely quiet and retiring, that there could be no reason against it. So mamma carried the day."

I made no reply, and had hard work to keep down the feelings of pride and haughtiness that were rising up within me. Margaret observed my silence, and asked, "Shall you not be glad to come?"

"I shall, of course, do as Mrs. Tower wishes," I replied, calmly. "I cannot profess to have any great desire to be present, especially as I have lately been in great sorrow."

My black dress said the rest, and Margaret was silent for a short time; but her silence seldom lasted long. The next topic of conversation was not such a safe one.

"There was another consultation held in the dining-room," she whispered, confidentially; "and that was whether a certain other person should be asked or not. Do you guess whom I mean?"

I honestly replied, "No."

"Run on and pick some buttercups, Flora," she said, hastily. "We can't have you hanging about us always;" and as Flora ran off, she continued,—

"Why, Captain Rymer, of course. Helen and Charlotte were both for his coming, and mamma said 'No,' he should not be invited by her. Then they tried to persuade papa to invite him, but he did not like to go against

mamma; and do you know, really, Charlotte wrote the invitation herself, and sent it."

I looked grave, and pondered in my own mind how I could put a stop to this kind of conversation. Margaret was fretted at my making no observation.

"Wasn't it bold of Charlotte?" she asked.

"Very bold."

"It was kind of her to do it for Helen, though. Of course, Helen could not have done it herself."

"Of course not."

"How provoking you are, Miss Spenser! Wouldn't you have done it if you had been Charlotte?"

"I hope not."

"Well, for my part, I think it was very kind of Charlotte."

"I suppose Miss Tower wishes her sister to marry Captain Rymer?"

"Yes."

"With or without her parents' consent?"

Margaret paused. "You are in a bad humor, Miss Spenser. I won't tell you any more about it."

"Well, let us talk of something else," I said, in a tone that was meant to be the essence of good-temper, but which did not appear to soothe Margaret.

"Nothing that interests me interests you," she said, pettishly.

"It is better that some things should not interest me," I said, quietly. "These are private family affairs that you are telling me about, which I am sure your mamma and sisters would not wish me to know."

"You are very conscientious," she said, in an unpleasant tone.

"I try to be," I replied.

"Perhaps you will feel it to be your duty to go and tell mamma that I have been telling you all this," she said, bitterly, but evidently with some concern.

"Should you like me to do so?"

"That question scarcely requires an answer, I should think, Miss Spenser."

"Well then, let us agree from henceforth to talk of nothing that we should be ashamed of any one knowing. I don't think you consider how completely you are putting yourself in my power by telling me these things. Some people would frighten you into doing whatever they wished, by threatening to tell your mamma what you would much rather she did not know."

"I think too well of you to suppose you capable of doing that, Miss Spenser."

"You know very little about me as yet, and it will be wise not to trust me till you know more. Besides, these are not matters that you ought to discuss with any stranger."

That evening Mrs. Tower came into the schoolroom, and told me of the proposed

dance, adding, "We shall be very happy to see you in the drawing-room, Miss Spenser, if you feel inclined to come."

I thanked her, and replied that I wished to do exactly what would be most pleasing to her; but that if she had no desire on the subject, I thought my deep mourning would scarcely be in character with a ball-room.

I confess that I experienced some pleasure in showing them all that my happiness did not depend upon joining the much-talked-of ball; and that I did not regard the being asked as such an honor and distinction as they seemed to consider it. Perhaps I was wrong; but it must be remembered that I had but just quitted a position which had entitled me to be invited to all parties in our neighborhood; and to feel that I was now asked out of pity and commiseration, was a little galling at first. Time, however, made me wiser; and when I saw how many governesses were wholly neglected on similar occasions, I learned to think it a kindness in Mrs. Tower to feel for my loneliness, and to be grateful for any tokens of consideration which might be shown me. In time, also, I learned to remember continually, what at first I was tempted to forget, that to those around me I was not Augusta Spenser, daughter of the well-known and much-respected vicar of Langtree, but merely Mrs. Tower's governess; and that small attentions, which I should formerly have taken as a right, must now be regarded as a favor; and that instead of being hurt if a little condescension betrayed itself in the manner of bestowing them, I must overlook every thing but the kindness which proffered them, and feel humble and grateful for it. I do not say whether this is the true and right position of a governess in the nineteenth century; but of one thing I am sure, that it is the only way of learning contentment, and that no true happiness or peace will be gained until such a tone of mind has been acquired.

It must not be supposed, however, that I received kindness and attention in a cringing or servile manner. I believe my manner was little changed from what it had been in former times. My father and mother invariably checked any signs of pride or haughtiness in us, and we were taught to be as gentle and courteous to those beneath us, as to those above us in rank. I experienced the benefit of this early training after I became a governess. I had few habits to alter. Modesty and diffidence, which were so essential to my position, came to me naturally; and although I had many rebellious feelings to check in my inmost heart, and many a lesson of humility to learn, I had only to demean myself as I had always been taught to do, and none could complain of either forwardness or awkwardness in my manner.

On the night in question, Mrs. Tower kindly excused my appearing in the drawing-room; but I did not think from her manner that my refusal was any satisfaction to her, and this gave me pleasure; for I had been haunted by the idea that she felt bound to invite me, and was doing so against her own wish, and that of the family.

The ball, little as I was apparently concerned in it, led to a series of events that placed me in a most awkward and painful dilemma, an account of which shall be reserved for another chapter.

CHAPTER V.

FOR several days after the ball, Margaret's visits to the schoolroom were long and frequent. She was never tired of telling me over and over again of the number of her partners, and the gallant speeches they made to her. I heard a full description of every dress in the room, and my table was littered over with ends of ribbon and artificial flowers, with which she made clumsy attempts at imitating some wreaths that had particularly struck her fancy. I must admit that my opinion of her character was not raised by what I then saw and heard. Frivolous as I had considered her before, I had not imagined that her head was really weak enough to be turned by the excitement of one evening; but such was the case. I found it actually impossible to persuade her to give her attention for a single half-hour to any of her studies; and I was much perplexed as to my duty when I found hour after hour slipping by, wasted in idle talk. More than once I resolved to speak to Mrs. Tower, but she so evidently disliked being appealed to when Margaret was concerned, and had passed over in silence so many instances of indolence and frivolity that had come beneath her notice, that I as frequently determined to wait a day or two longer, in the hope that a change for the better might take place.

From Margaret I heard that both Mr. and Mrs. Tower were so much annoyed at Captain Rymer's open and undisguised devotion to their daughter Helen, on the evening of the ball, that they had put a stop to all further intercourse between them; and that, much to the chagrin of the Misses Tower, he had not since been admitted to the house. I could not forbear asking, on one occasion, whether Margaret knew the cause of her parents' decided objection to an engagement, but only received for answer a somewhat hurried and confused explanation, that Captain Rymer was unfortunately not such a sober, steady, prosy individual as her father and mother would have liked, and that because he was rather "fast," they had taken a prejudice against him. My own sympathies were cer-

tainly on the side of the parents; and after receiving this information, I tried harder than ever to check Margaret's tongue, or, at all events, keep her from repeating to me all that passed in the family with regard to the subject. In this attempt I failed utterly. I had not then the experience I have since gained, or I might have succeeded better; but as I believe not a few governesses are placed in the same false and unpleasant position that I found myself gradually sinking into, I will detail my own experience on the subject, in the hope that some

"Forlorn and shipwrecked brother
Seeing, may take heart again."

Some weeks passed by, and although it appeared from Margaret's reports that the subject was less canvassed than formerly by the family, it did not seem to me to be at all less thought of by the sisters, and more than once a presentiment crossed my mind that, far from dying a natural death, Helen Tower's interest in Captain Rymer was only fostered by being crossed, and that mischief was secretly brewing.

About this time Margaret was a great deal with her sisters, and consequently less with me. They appeared to be taking her more into their confidence, and often went long walks together, to which Mrs. Tower made no objection, thinking, perhaps, that a long country ramble was better for Helen than a drive into the neighboring town, or a visit to a friend, when there was always a chance of meeting Captain Rymer. For my own part I thought differently, and regarded with some suspicion the sudden fondness for country walks that had seized all three. It was not my place however to interfere, and I could not but rejoice over the many free afternoons that Margaret's walks with her sisters gave me.

One evening (it had been a wet day, and the Misses Tower had been unable to go out, and their equanimity was sorely disturbed), Margaret came into the schoolroom with her work, after the children were gone to bed. I saw at once the fretful state of her mind by the way she snapped her thread, and tossed down first one occupation and then another, unable to settle to do any thing. Finally, she took to pacing up and down the room, with her arms folded behind her, and began to vent her ill-humor.

"What a wretched day it has been!"

"Rather showery," I replied, "but we must expect some showery days at this season of the year."

"Showery weather is the most provoking of all," she said. "I can stand a downright, pouring wet day much better than these tiresome little showers that come just when one doesn't want them."

"I had nothing to say, so I made no reply. "Mamma is really so absurdly prudent," she continued, petulantly; "it is so ridiculous to suppose that a little sprinkling like this can give one a cold. Where is the use of being brought up in the country, if one is to be afraid of every shower?"

I could not help smiling at Margaret's newly acquired hardihood, for a short month before a fresh breeze or a slight mist was made a sufficient excuse for avoiding the daily exercise.

"Mrs. Tower is on the safe side, I dare say," I observed, cautiously.

"No, she is not on the safe side, for she has made us all intensely cross. We wanted above all things to take a particular walk to-day, and she has just spoiled our pleasure."

"Where were you going?"

"Oh! a long way off, through some fields and down a glen, where there are quantities of blue-bells and primroses."

"It would have been very rash to go through the fields just after it had been raining," I remarked. "No doubt you will be able to get the flowers to-morrow or the day after."

"No, that I'm sure we sha'n't," she said impatiently. "You don't know any thing about it, Miss Spenser. It must have been to-day or not at all."

I felt rather provoked at her tone, and asked, "Will a shower of rain wash away the blue-bells and primroses?"

"No, of course not; but that was not the only object of our going. We had another very particular reason for wishing to go to-day, and we have not only been disappointed ourselves, but forced to disappoint somebody else;" and Margaret dropped her voice mysteriously, and gave a sagacious nod with her head, looking very important at having a secret to conceal.

I suddenly became excessively uncomfortable, for I doubted not I should presently hear a confirmation of all my suspicions. I instantly changed the subject, and to my untold relief, she did not again revert to it.

The fact that I had heard nothing in actual words to prove to me that the daughters were secretly acting in defiance of their parents' wishes, gave me at first great comfort. I went to bed with an easy conscience, assuring myself that I *knew* nothing of their proceedings which would be displeasing to the father and mother. But after I had put out my candle, and lay quietly thinking it over in the dark, I began to see that I was palming off a prevarication upon my conscience, and deriving comfort from it. What had actual words to do with the matter? I was as morally certain that a daily meeting took place between Helen Tower and Captain Rymer, as if Margaret had told me so with her own

lips. Consequently, I was, in truth, a party to the deception that the daughters were carrying on with the parents; and if these foolish meetings resulted in an elopement or a secret marriage, I should not be free from responsibility in the matter.

My mind was sadly harassed by this view of the case, and I tossed restlessly from side to side, revolving what I ought to do. Sometimes it appeared to me my duty to warn Margaret and her sisters that I was aware of their proceedings, and thus frighten them into giving up Captain Rymer altogether. But this would afford no guarantee for their not carrying on an intercourse in a still deeper and more subtle manner; and I had little doubt that if I thus brought myself into collision with the elder sisters, they would not rest satisfied until they had undermined me in their mother's good estimation, and obtained my dismissal. Evidently this scheme was impracticable.

The only other resource that presented itself, was to acquaint Mrs. Tower with my suspicions, and trust to her judgment for quoting me as her authority or not. I foresaw that, even in this case, I should probably render Cheverell Park a very unpleasant residence to me; but if I did so through acting up to my duty, the consequences must not deter me. Then again, in a fit of shrinking, I half resolved to wait a day or two until I could get Madeleine's advice, only the consideration that great mischief might occur during even this short interval, deterred me, and I finally fell asleep, resolved to seek a private interview with Mrs. Tower the following day, mention my fears, and leave the rest in her hands.

I awoke with a weight on my spirits the next morning, and felt relieved when I recollected that I should probably have some difficulty in obtaining an interview with Mrs. Tower, without arousing the suspicions of her daughters, for which there appeared no necessity. This hope was delusive, however, for of happened that Mrs. Tower was called out of the room upon business during breakfast-time, and, as I left the parlor afterwards, I met her alone in the hall. My heart failed me for a moment, and I almost determined to defer the dreaded request, but second thoughts were best, and, pausing, I observed, "Can I say a few words to you in private, during the day, Mrs. Tower?"

She looked surprised, but replied, "Certainly; I will come to you in the schoolroom; immediately, Miss Spenser."

My heart throbbed; the dreaded moment was come; but I tried to calm myself by recollecting that the sooner it came, the sooner it would be over, and Mrs. Tower could feel nothing but gratitude at my performing such a distasteful duty. I sent Flora to the nur-

sery, and took up my embroidery in the hope of composing my nerves.

She came almost directly, and advancing with an air of kind concern, observed, "I hope nothing is wrong, Miss Spenser; you have no bad news to trouble you?"

This kind commencement gave me confidence, and I opened the subject quietly.

"Nothing is wrong that concerns me, thank you, and perhaps you may think that in touching on other subjects, not connected with me, I am overstepping the bounds of duty; but I can only assure you that it is most painful to me to say what I am about to say, and if it should be displeasing to you to hear, we can drop the subject at once."

"Pray do not keep me in suspense," she remarked, anxiously.

I grew confused as I approached the subject, and hesitated and stammered, afraid of getting Margaret into trouble, yet wishing to be quite candid.

"I have reasons for thinking," I began; "that the visits of Captain Rymer at Cheverell Park, were not welcome to you and to Mr. Tower, and I have been told that you were anxious to discourage any intimacy between him and the Misses Tower—"

It was discouraging to observe Mrs. Tower draw herself up stiffly, and assume a look of cold dignity. I continued, "I should not have ventured to meddle on such a point, had I not reasons for thinking that the Misses Tower are in the habit of meeting Captain Rymer in their walks, and that I had no right to conceal my suspicions from you. If I have done wrong, pray forgive me. It has been most painful to me to speak, and I am afraid if the Misses Tower know that I have done so they will take a dislike to me, but I felt that I held a position of trust here—"

"Say no more, Miss Spenser," interrupted Mrs. Tower, in a tone that was meant to be kind, but was exceedingly stiff and cold. "You have acted rightly. I trust you may be mistaken, but time will prove."

She left the room, and I felt far more completely upset and uncomfortable than I had done while awaiting her arrival. I fancied that, after all, I must have mistaken my duty, and have interfered impertinently in what did not concern me, for such was the impression left by Mrs. Tower's manner. With somewhat bitter feelings I said to myself that in future I would let things take their chance, and if the Misses Tower got into mischief their parents must take the consequences. It took me a long while to overcome the irritable, angry feelings that were roused in my mind, and I found myself once more in tears, pining for home and my mother and Madeleine. I grew calmer at last, however, and began to see that I had been unjust and hasty in my

conclusions; and, going into my bedroom, I prayed for forgiveness, and for a humbler and milder spirit. As soon as I felt really composed, I sent for the children, and the morning passed quickly away. Every one was just as usual at luncheon time, and I strove hard to be the same; but I was painfully conscious in my manner, and fancied that my face was hotter than usual. No one appeared to notice me, and, as soon as luncheon was over, I took the children for a long country ramble, which completely restored my equanimity.

Margaret was particularly out of sorts at tea-time, and the cause soon transpired, her mother having taken the elder daughters to pay some calls in the carriage, and desired Margaret not to leave the grounds, as I had already started, and there was no one to walk with her.

I went to bed with a light heart, after all, that night, and without any doubts as to whether I had performed my duty or not; but I still felt some uneasiness with regard to my own position in the house, and some fears that it might be influenced for the worse by the part I had taken during the day.

CHAPTER VI.

I DO not think that the Misses Tower were ever made acquainted with the fact that I had been the person to cast a suspicion upon their apparently innocent country walks. Mrs. Tower was a woman of great judgment and discretion. She always avoided scenes. If she discovered that any thing was wrong, she never attempted to remedy the past, but set herself quietly to work to prevent the recurrence of the mischief in future. This was how she acted in the present instance. I do not think Captain Rymer's name was ever mentioned between the mother and daughters; but, day after day she arranged some scheme for employing the afternoon, taking care that her elder daughters should always accompany her; and she never appeared to hear the objections, or observe the black, discontented looks, with which her proposal was usually received.

I could not help thinking myself that perfect openness would have answered better in the end between a mother and her daughters; and I must admit that there did not exist that deep affection and respect in the Misses Tower's hearts for their mother which I have observed where perfect confidence has been as much the mother's happiness as the daughters' safeguard. I noticed also that Mrs. Tower was always restless and uneasy, evidently suspicious of every whisper, every meaning glance, every letter that came into, or went out of, the house. But that she succeeded in effectually stopping all intercourse between Helen and Captain Rymer, I cannot

deny. The short-lived attachment speedily died a natural and painless death; the captain soon afterwards left the neighborhood, and Helen transferred her affections to a very pleasing young barrister, whose attentions were happily more acceptable to her parents.

I have always thought that Margaret guessed the cause of her walks with her sisters being stopped. She avoided the school-room for some time afterwards, and for more than a month volunteered no confidences, but treated me in a distant, formal manner. More than this she dared not do, for she knew well that if it transpired that I had warned Mrs. Tower, the first question that would naturally suggest itself to all minds, would be, "How came Miss Spenser to know any thing about the matter?" and probably she thought my exculpation would be, "Margaret told me." Her fear of her sisters, therefore, kept her quiet, and as I quietly acquiesced in her avoidance of the schoolroom, the affair dropped silently to the ground.

I now come to a portion of my experiences that it is not a little painful to relate, though, having resolved to keep back nothing that may be of benefit to others, I enter upon it without hesitation, hoping it may prove of service to some.

When I had been rather more than six months at Cheverell Park, a second large party was given, to which I was again invited. This time I gladly accepted the invitation, and looked forward with pleasure to joining once more in amusements which had formerly been a source of great enjoyment to me. I meditated long upon my proper position in Mrs. Tower's ball-room. I even gave full and anxious consideration to my dress, and finally decided that I would wear a high dress, in accordance with Madeleine's advice, but that a high black silk dress would be out of character in a ball-room. I thought it best, therefore, to have a new white muslin made, with several deep, quiet tucks, and for my hair I purchased some black velvet bows. Nothing could have been more calculated to escape notice of every kind than my toilette, when dressed. I had decided to decline all polkas and waltzes, but thought there could be no objection to my dancing a quadrille, if I had the opportunity.

It may be imagined how forlorn and lonely I felt in the brilliantly lighted room, knowing no one, and seeing everybody sociable and merry around me. More than once I wished myself in my quiet schoolroom, and bitterly did I feel the anomalous position of a governess in an English family. I knew that my birth and education were equal to those of most in the room; that my manners were as good, and my natural address as easy and unembarrassed as those of any around me;

that I was not the least changed in essentials from the Augusta Spenser who had formerly been one of the happiest and most lively at such scenes. Where then was the change? I was a governess! I know not how it is—whether or not it is an evil capable of being remedied—whether it is possible to combine the ease and enjoyment of a young lady with the staid propriety of a governess. All I know is this, that as society is constituted in the nineteenth century, the only course open to a wise governess, is to acquiesce in its rules and etiquettes, and not examine too closely into the trials and humiliations it forces upon her. She must rise superior to such feelings; she must fully realize that her occupation is an honorable one, which, if rightly used, can but reflect dignity upon her, and she must never try to throw aside the governess and assume the young lady, for such a step will be fatal to her influence over her pupils, and to her position in the family.

But my reflections, as I sat in Mrs. Tower's drawing-room, were not precisely of this sober, contented nature. I rebelled inwardly against my position. I felt angry with Mrs. Tower for having placed me in it. I felt indignant with the Misses Tower for taking no notice of me, and irate with Margaret for the manner in which she was laughing and flirting with a conceited-looking young man, at a little distance, steadily averting her eye all the time from the corner of the room in which I sat.

Dancing commenced, but no one thought of me. How thankful should I have felt had they been dependent upon a piano for their music, and I had been allowed to perform the part of musician throughout the whole evening! Some, in reading this confession, may feel contempt for the writer, but if so, they have never known the bitter feelings that were stirred up in my heart that night; the intense, aching loneliness, the unwept tears that gathered in my eyes throughout the evening; the miserable, uncharitable thoughts that passed through my mind about those around me; no, truly, weak and sinful as I was, I was more to be pitied than despised, for the trial was great.

Dance succeeded dance; the dancers grew more and more lively, more and more engrossed in their occupation, less and less observant of me. Several times I half rose to retire to my room, that I might give vent unseen to the bitterness of my spirit; but the dread of attracting attention, of appearing annoyed at the isolation of my situation, as often deterred me, and I sat down again. At length better thoughts entered my heart, and I prayed for strength to be able to resist the temptations of the adversary. Incongruous as such an action in such a place may appear, I had no hesitation in offering up a prayer,

with the sight of the dancers before my eyes, and the sounds of gallops and waltzes in my ears. I had always been taught that God was everywhere, and that his ear was ever open to a humble, earnest prayer, offered under whatever circumstances, in whatever situation. I grew more composed, and then for the first time began to see that there were others in as forlorn a position as myself, and those not governesses as I was.

My attention was presently caught by hearing a very sweet-toned gentleman's voice just behind me, ask in low accents, "Can you tell me, Miss Wood, who that young lady in white muslin is? She is seated on the couch, and is more plainly dressed than any one in the room."

"What young lady do you mean? Oh! that one,—she is Mrs. Tower's governess, and I think her name is Spenser. Mrs. Tower told me she was a clergyman's daughter."

"Indeed! Do you think you could introduce me to her? She looks very forlorn."

"Certainly, if you wish it," was the reply, in a surprised tone, and presently Miss Wood, whom I had met on previous occasions at Cheverell Park, stood beside me, and introduced me to a young clergyman, whom I had before noticed in the room, on account of his pleasant face and gentlemanly manner.

Mr. Rashleigh took a seat beside me, and I soon found myself talking to him on perfectly equal, sociable terms. How rapidly had the dulness of the evening vanished! The rest was nothing but enjoyment to me. I discovered that he had a curacy in the neighborhood, that he knew all my favorite walks, had read most of my favorite books, and finally, the casual mention of my old home, led to the discovery that we had some mutual friends.

His manner was peculiarly pleasant, being quite free from any thing like flirting, and indeed rather grave than otherwise; yet it conveyed the impression that he was interested in me, and took a pleasure in drawing out my character; and he had the power of giving a vivid interest to every subject he touched upon, which rendered him an unusually agreeable companion. I have occasionally met such men since in the world, but not often, and I am inclined now to think, although prejudice made me judge far otherwise at the time, that they have none of them been of a very high or elevated tone of mind, but that this gift of pleasing led them to regard it as of more importance than it really is, and made them, consequently, very sensitive to the opinions of others.

Very differently did I think at the time. Infinite gratitude for the moment swallowed up every other sensation. I was almost overpowered by the fact of a gentleman and a

clergyman singling out a poor neglected governess, from a room full of elegant and aristocratic beauties, to converse with her for the greater part of an evening. The amount of reverence and admiration that the act inspired in me, mocks all my powers of description. It would be considered simply ludicrous by the greater part of my readers, did I attempt to embody it in words, but it would find an echo in the hearts of some few who have experienced the desolation of spirit upon which it burst like a sunbeam. Those few will understand it without further description, and it is for those that these experiences are almost entirely transcribed.

The evening at length drew to a close, and my new friend wished me a pleasant "good-night." I immediately retired to my room, too well satisfied at leaving the company with an agreeable impression, to wish to stay and have it effaced.

I found it hard the next morning to settle into the dull routine of school-work. The events of the previous evening had unsettled me entirely. I felt as if I had been carried backward, for a few short hours, into my former life. While talking to Mr. Rashleigh I had escaped from the governess for a time, and many a pleasurable sensation of independence and equality had returned in full force. His manner had made me feel that, despite the occupation that necessity had forced upon me, I was a lady by birth and education, and that I was not only entitled to his respect, but actually possessed it. I do not think there was any thing wrong in all this; it cannot be denied that the sensations were but natural. I was not in love. I hope I was not weak or foolish enough to fall in love with a stranger, simply because he treated me with a kindness and courtesy that bitter experience had taught me were wanting in the world at large. I believe that fervid gratitude was all that I felt, or at least, believed myself to feel at the time; though, on looking back through a vista of many years, I will candidly own that I now think my feelings towards him, even after that short acquaintance, were such that they could without difficulty, have ripened into love, had he given me reason to think my love was desired. Many years have passed over my head since then, but even now my cheeks tingle as I make this confession. O young governesses, beware! The loneliness and desolation of our lot make us peculiarly susceptible to kindness and consideration, and the world should pity, and not condemn us, if our starved and withered hearts respond too warmly to these rare tokens of interest and sympathy. Yet for our own sakes we should beware. Many a governess has fondly brooded over small signs of kindness, until she has ended in imagining that what sprang only

from Christian courtesy, had its origin in a warmer and more individual feeling, and has ended by experiencing all the bitterness of unrequited love. Nor is it altogether fair to those who take compassion on our isolation, that they should be unable to do so without danger of arousing feelings and kindling hopes which are far from their own minds. We have no safeguard but in praying against such temptations, and in trying to throw our hearts entirely into our duties. It may be wisely said to all classes, that if God wills that any should marry, he will bring it about without any scheming or manœuvring on our part, but to no class is this saying so applicable as to governesses. They *must* bear it in mind, and act upon it, if they wish rightly to perform their duties. A governess cannot give her undivided attention to her pupils, and be musing upon marriage at the same time. She must be content to leave her future in God's hands, and bow meekly to whatever lot he may ordain for her.

At the time I am speaking of, I had no thoughts of marriage connected with Mr. Rashleigh, though it cannot be denied that he occupied a large portion of my thoughts throughout the day. I believe sincerely that I struggled hard against the listlessness that continually crept over me during lesson hours. I remember that, through fear of not having done full justice to Flora in the morning, I made her come to me, much against her will, for another hour in the afternoon, since Margaret was too much tired to give any time to her studies on that day.

I spent the evening in writing a long letter to my mother, giving her a full account of the ball, with every little detail that I thought likely to interest her; and certainly my thoughts must have been simple and innocent, for I wrote a glowing description of my new friend, and the kindness he had shown me, without a thought of shame that the letter would be read by my sisters as well as my mother.

It may be wondered at that I should dwell so much upon so commonplace a subject as the casual attention of a gentleman in a ball-room; but many a smaller event than this threw a tint of coloring over my quiet, monotonous life, and were I to restrict my narrative to the recital of only great facts and startling incidents, my tale were soon told.

CHAPTER VII.

THE weeks passed quietly, and uneventfully by, and all my pleasant thoughts of Mr. Rashleigh and the ball "faded into twilight grey," and were only mused on occasionally, as a bright green spot in a parched and pathless waste. Day after day brought the same duties, the same small interest. the same

varieties. At length the prospect of a little variety appeared in an invitation for Margaret and Flora to a juvenile party in the neighborhood, in which invitation I was included. After spending a whole morning in expressing her extreme scorn at the idea of joining a juvenile party, Margaret ended by forgetting her scruples and accepting the invitation, and the whole of the afternoon, and the greater part of the next few days, were spent in concocting a wreath and bouquet that should look as little juvenile as possible. I had no need to disturb myself about my dress; it could be but creditable for a governess to appear twice or thrice, or a dozen times, in the same dress, provided it was a suitable one, which, happily white muslin can never fail to be, for any description of party, at any hour of the day. The party was a particularly pleasant one to me, for I no longer found myself obliged to sit in a quiet corner and speak to no one, but my energies had full scope in dancing with the children, playing quadrilles for them, and starting them in their games. Mrs. Morris, the lady of the house, treated me with great kindness, and I felt my spirits rise proportionably, until, in turning suddenly round upon a mirror at the upper end of the room, I almost started to see a bright color upon the usually pale face that met my gaze.

About an hour before supper, feeling a little exhausted, I retired to a quiet couch in the corner of the room, and contented myself with looking on. Presently a commotion at the door intimated that another guest had arrived, even at that late hour, and almost immediately Mr. Morris entered the room with Mr. Rashleigh. I was greatly pleased at having met him once more, but the pleasure was rapidly superseded by a chill fear that I should not be recognized, and that his gentle, courteous attentions would be given to some one else. I watched him eagerly as he spoke to Mrs. Morris, and made jocose remarks to some of the children. He appeared perfectly at home there, and knew every one, exchanging a few words with each as he passed round the room.

The time seemed interminable until he approached my corner of the room, and then I grew so foolishly restless and nervous in wondering what my greeting would be, that I could have wished to see him turn back and retrace his steps. I need not have feared. With an expression of surprise and satisfaction he shook hands with me, and having then completed the circuit of the room, dropped naturally upon the couch at my side.

I will candidly own that I was much gratified at this renewal of our acquaintance. My kind friends were not so many in number as that one more or less was a matter of no consequence to me. If possible I found him even

pleasanter than on the former occasion. The gentle deference of his manner never varied and he renewed the conversation of our last meeting in a way that showed it had left an impression on his mind. We continued our discussion of books, and this led on to a comparison of the merits of different poets. We each had our favorites, and in defending our peculiar tastes, and quoting passages in support of our opinions, much time slipped happily by.

"Is it possible you have never read *The Princess*!" he exclaimed at length. "Why, it is one of Tennyson's best poems. I must lend it you. How shall I contrive to let you have it?"

I hesitated; the temptation was sore. This kind of intercourse would cast a charm over my dull life that made my pulses beat with pleasant anticipation. But was it wise? Would Madeleine have approved it? Was it likely to be pleasing to Mrs. Tower? Had Mr. Rashleigh been a married man, I need not have doubted, but he was not so. I felt unable to decide hastily as to the wisest course to pursue, but a vague notion lurked in my mind that the least pleasant course is usually the safest, and thanking him cordially, I declined the offer.

The moment the words were cut of my mouth a burning flush covered my face, as the discourtesy of the refusal presented itself to my mind. Mr. Rashleigh did not appear to regard it in the same light. He evinced no surprise, but went on discussing the poet in question, as if scarcely conscious of my last speech. Yet I felt intuitively that such was not the case; and the delicacy thus displayed, and the inexpressible gratification of feeling my motives understood and appreciated, increased my admiration and respect in no small degree.

The evening, like all other pleasant evenings, came to an end at last, and I returned home with my charges. It never crossed my mind to be otherwise than greatly rejoiced at having met my new friend again, though I doubt whether more pleasure or pain resulted from this renewal of the acquaintance. I was unsettled for my duties again the next morning, and trifling vexations that I had previously borne with contentment, and almost indifference, seemed wholly insupportable. I had difficulty in controlling my temper, which was usually even and placid; I was irritable with Flora, and short with Margaret, who, owing to the excitement of the previous evening, was particularly trying.

For several days I was restless and discontented. I do not know that I thought much of Mr. Rashleigh, but whenever I felt slighted and neglected, the remembrance of his courteous manner and evident deference to my

opinion came across me with an effect at once soothing and irritating. Discontent grew upon me day by day, until at last I found myself fretting at my position, and entirely unfitted for the duties I had to perform. A miserable time ensued. I became impatient to see to the end of my probation, envious of those whose lot raised them above the trials to which I was subjected. I felt a feverish longing to return to my mother and sisters, and at times indulged in angry thoughts that they should all be living happily together while I was in exile, forgetting that it was by my own choice I left them, and only remembering at last, with sensations of bitter self-reproach, the long and constant letters I received from them, and my mother's still unabated grief at having me separated from her.

These feelings subsided at length, and I was able to see how sinful the indulgence of them had been without inquiring into their true cause. I involuntarily connected their origin with my meeting with Mr. Rashleigh, yet I could not bring myself to wish that we might not meet again, but satisfied my conscience by resolving that any future meeting should not be attended with similar results.

We did meet again before long, and often afterwards. I found him always the same in manner, and although I noticed that his behavior to other ladies was as courteous and pleasing as it was to me, I still fancied, with or without reason, that his interest in me was greater than in most of those around us, and that my conversation afforded him more pleasure than that of most people.

Mrs. Tower and her daughters did not usually appear to observe the attention with which he treated me; only one night as we were all returning from a Christmas dance in the neighborhood, I heard Helen Tower say to her sister, as they put on their opera cloaks—"Mr. Rashleigh has made Miss Spenser the object of his devotion to-night. I wonder who it will be next."

The words were painfully jarring, and rung unceasingly in my ears the whole night. And here, before I proceed further, I must state that to this moment I do not believe Mr. Rashleigh ever thought he was a flirt. I cannot deny that he was culpably inconsiderate of the effect his attentions might produce; and I have since heard of more than one instance in which young ladies have fancied his peculiarly pleasing manner was indicative of a special and individual interest felt in them.

Such was my case. I was not foolishly fanciful or susceptible, and it was some time before I allowed myself to indulge in the thought that he indeed cared for me. But the thought did steal in unawares at length, and truth obliges me to confess that there was happiness in the idea, and that after it had once fully

dawned upon me, it cast sunshine upon every shadow, and opened out before me a bright, vague future.

It may be thought unmaidenly that I should have indulged in such dreams before receiving actual proofs of Mr. Rashleigh's regard for me; and perhaps I was too premature in drawing such conclusions from his attentions; but my great loneliness and pining for affection must plead my excuse; and thus much I may say in my own defence, that I did not allow the belief to influence my behavior towards him in the smallest degree, except in being more studiously retiring, and watchful not to attempt to thrust myself into contact with him in any way.

I no longer found any difficulty in performing my duty by my pupils. Without actually allowing myself to make schemes for the future, I had ceased to fret at my present lot, or speculate as to the probable length of its duration. I felt even in spirits, calm, cheerful, and energetic; good-tempered with Flora, forbearing with Margaret, and full of love and sympathy for those at home.

Thus time passed on, and summer at length arrived. My acquaintance with Mr. Rashleigh had been of nine months' duration; and although I cannot repeat a word or an action of his during that time, which actually justifies the impression that existed in my mind, yet I am sure it was not without some reason that I yielded to it.

One morning I joined the family as usual at luncheon-time. They were sometimes exceedingly irregular at this meal, and on this day in particular, several were absent, and only Mrs. Tower sat down with us. Soon afterwards the Misses Tower entered in their riding costume, and laying aside their hats, joined us without any further toilette.

"Have you had a pleasant ride, Charlotte?" asked her mother.

"Very, mamma, thank you; we rode into Westow, and executed the commissions, and as there was plenty of time, we returned home by way of the Grange, and inquired after Mrs. Upton."

"Mary Upton saw us from the window," chimed in Helen, "and came out and entreated us to go in, so we had the horses put up, and went in and sat some time with them."

"And heard some news that astonished us," said Charlotte. "Mr. Rashleigh was married last week, and it appears that he has been engaged for some time, although very few people about here were aware of it."

"The lady was very young," observed Helen, "and it has only been an acknowledged engagement for a short time, but Mrs. Morris, who is in his confidence, says it has been a long attachment."

"Then, I suppose Mr. Rashleigh will leave Westow now," remarked Mrs. Tower.

"No; he has taken that small house just out of the town, near the Morris', and Mrs. Morris is superintending the papering and furnishing. They are expected home in a fortnight, and there is such excitement in Westow about the young bride."

"Mrs. Morris has seen her, and says she is a very sweet-looking girl," said Helen. "I am sure I hope Mr. Rashleigh will be a little less profuse in his attentions for the future, or the bride will not have a very agreeable lot."

"It is all manner with him," said Mrs. Tower. "He is the same to so many people, and never seems to consider that a misconception may be put upon his attentions."

"It is all very well for a single man," said Charlotte, "but will hardly sit well on a married man, or be pleasing to a young wife."

"As it is, I expect she will hear a great many rumors that will make her uncomfortable," added Helen. "He has been talked of in so many quarters."

"I am sure Mary Upton thought he admired her at one time," said Charlotte; "he always used to single her out from a room full of people, and devote himself to her for a whole evening. I thought she looked rather conscious when she told us the news to-day."

"And yet one could not call Mr. Rashleigh a flirt," mused Helen. "His manners are so grave and subdued."

"I believe his intentions to be innocent," said Mrs. Tower; "but I am exceedingly glad to hear he is married, for I have always been expecting him to get into trouble."

Luncheon was by this time over. I rose and went to my own room. My head was throbbing, my hands were trembling. My dream was over; the quiet life of a governess lay before me once more in the vast future; the glow that had lately lent such a brightness to it had faded away; only the dreary gray of a winter sky remained.

Yet I was wonderfully calm. I shed no tears, I indulged in no regrets. I was not sufficiently collected for prayer, but I took my prayer-book, which lay on the toilet-table, and read over the psalms for the day. I am not sure that I entered into them, or was actually conscious of any thing but the familiar phrases, and a certain deadening of thought for the time being, but the effect was good. When I had finished, I felt more equal to considering what I ought to do. This did not require much reflection; my duty was plain. I must put away the past as a dream, and throw myself into the small duties and interests of the present moment. I pined for fresh air to

cool my head, yet the thought of a solitary walk was unendurable. A scrap of paper lay on the table. I took it up and wrote in pencil, "Are you inclined for a long walk? I have a wish to go to the top of Harrowbridge hill this afternoon, and we might read German in the evening, if you would like it." I twisted it into a note, and going to the nursery door, desired Flora to take it to her sister Margaret. In five minutes she returned, with the message that Margaret was putting on her bonnet.

I was not dull during the walk; on the contrary, I talked more than usual. Margaret was in high spirits, and the fresh breeze on the top of the heath-covered hill was exhilarating. We were both completely exhausted when we returned, and the German lesson was postponed until the next day. She went to bed soon after tea, and I followed her example. I was too tired to lie awake and think, and a good night's rest, if it did not restore the lost tone to my mind, yet gave me bodily strength to struggle against the depression that hung on my spirits.

It was not only the news of Mr. Rashleigh's marriage that weighed on my heart; the conviction that I had been guilty of unmaidenly conjectures, and had imagined love where none existed, was inexpressibly wounding to my pride. I felt lowered in my own self-esteem. I thought how grieved and astonished Madeleine would be, if she were acquainted with the hopes that had been buoying me up for months. This idea pressed heavily on me. I felt like a hypocrite when I wrote home in a strain that led them all to believe I was cheerful and contented. If only Madeleine knew how weak and silly I had been, I should care less. At length, when a few days had elapsed, and this trouble still haunted me; I resolved to write and confess all to her; and even if her esteem for me was lessened in consequence, I felt I should deserve it, and that her sympathy and advice would be very comforting. I penned a long, and most humble and regretful letter to her, entreating her not to love me less for the weakness of which I had been guilty, and begging her to believe that I had sufficient strength of mind to shake off the effects of the shock, and to fulfil my duties as if it had never occurred. I bound her to secrecy, and petitioned for an early answer.

Very miserable days of suspense were the three that elapsed before an answer arrived, but it came at last, and with a beating heart I carried it to the seclusion of my own room, that no eye might witness the emotion with which I could not but read it. Thank God! it contained for me nothing but sympathy and comfort, and assurances of a sister's unchanging love. There was not a word or ex-

pression in the whole letter that could be construed into a proof of disappointment or lessened esteem. Madeleine felt for me most deeply and tenderly, and although she admitted that I had certainly been weak in coming to premature conclusions upon what had proved insufficient grounds, she expressed only the gentlest pity for my unhappy mistake, and urged me not to yield to despondency, or to reproach myself too much for the thoughts I had indulged in.

I was very greatly soothed and comforted by the letter, and felt able to go through my daily routine in a far more happy and contented temper. My greatest trial lay in being forced to struggle against the miserable temptation of trying to pry into the unknown future. Had I yielded to this I should probably have given up in despair, not having courage to face a lifetime spent in my present sphere of duty. I did struggle, however, and I conquered, and I have lived to thank God that strength was given me to do so. For many months I toiled on from day to day, putting aside all thoughts of the morrow, and endeavoring to live for the improvement of the present hour only. At the end of that time, I had regained so much of my former buoyancy of spirit, that I was no longer forced to keep the same rigid guard over myself, but discovered, with much thankfulness, that the trifling events of the present moment could interest and amuse me, without suggesting the doubt whether they were destined to form the only change and variety in a long life. A month spent at home, the following Christmas, completed the cure, and when I returned, and accidentally met Mr. Rashleigh and his young wife at an evening party at Mrs. Morris', I could admire her beauty, and talk with him over the books we had been reading, without any fear of disturbing my peace of mind.

CONCLUSION.

TEN years have elapsed since the events occurred which I have been recording. I have ceased to be a governess, and God has willed that I should have a home of my own, and a kind husband. But before dilating upon the blessings of my present lot, I must go back and give a hasty outline of the continuation and conclusion of my career as a governess.

I lived four years at Cheverell Park, and only left because Mr. Tower met with some considerable losses, and found it necessary to retrench his expenses, and send Flora to school. Of course, during the whole of that time, I had trials and annoyances to bear with, but they decreased as Mrs. Tower and her daughters learned to know me better, and as experience proved that I had no wish to

thrust myself forward, but was content with the subordinate and modest position of a governess. I frankly own that I believe the family at Cheverell Park would have been just one of those, so frequently complained of, who treat governesses with scorn and *hauteur*, had I given them the opportunity for doing so. But I also believe that such treatment is impracticable where the governess keeps strictly to her own path of duty, and never presumes, or exposes herself to the annoyance of being repelled and slighted. It is impossible that a mother should desire a governess, however lady-like and accomplished, to occupy a footing of equality with her own daughters. It may seem hard to the governess, if she has been brought up in the same sphere of life, but she must remember that whatever her antecedents, she is a governess.

It may be very pretty in the daughters of a house to be lively in manner, quick at repartee, conversable with gentlemen; but these qualities would be far from pleasing in a governess. No mother could be expected to approve of such conduct in the person to whom she intrusted her children's education. Only one course then remains. Since all means of earning a livelihood have their disadvantages, it ought to be considered inseparable from the lot of a governess that such ways should be at once renounced; and if any young lady, who particularly excels in the art of pleasing, and is yet reduced to gain her own livelihood, feels that she is unable to lay aside such manners, and assume the sober gravity requisite, she should feel sure that she is unfitted for the task, and turn her attention to some other means of support. As a companion, lively manners and easy conversation may be a desirable qualification, but not as a governess.

As Flora grew older, and my character became more thoroughly understood, I joined the family more than had been at first permitted. Occasionally I was asked to dine at the late dinner, and Mrs. Tower kindly invited me to bring my work into the drawing-room when I found the evening lonely. I took advantage but sparingly of this invitation, feeling that however kindly they might compassionate my solitude, yet there could not but be a constraint over the free family intercourse when I was present. Frequently, when music was the order for the evening, Margaret would come and fetch me to take part in a madrigal, or play the bass of a duet. I was never too proud for these subordinate parts, for I felt that it was right that Margaret and her sisters should be first in every thing in their father's house.

Helen Tower's marriage took place while I was still at Cheverell Park, and Margaret

was engaged to be married when I left. I cannot say that I felt any strong attachment to any of the family, from first to last, with the exception of Robert, although Mrs. Tower was uniformly kind to me, and was really sorry when circumstances compelled me to leave. I had no difficulty in meeting with a second situation, as I received high testimonials from Mrs. Tower.

My second home was in the family of a clergyman. I had four pupils, varying in age from eight to fourteen, and as they were not old enough to subject me to the annoyances I had at first experienced with the Misses Tower, and their mother was a gentle, sensible woman, who invariably treated me with kindness and courtesy, I passed many very happy years in the family, and only left them to enter a home of my own. My four years' experience in Mrs. Tower's household enabled me to avoid much that was disagreeable when I entered upon my second sphere of duty, and gave me a certain amount of standing and dignity, that I had at first greatly felt in want of. It was with feelings of real regret that I left Mr. Woodbourne's house; and I must always take the greatest interest in the future of my pupils, especially that of the youngest, whose character I moulded, as far as I was able, into my ideal of womanly excellence, and who will always be very dear to me, as I have the happiness of thinking I am to her. Mr. and Mrs. Woodbourne parted with me as with a valued friend, and assured me of a warm welcome whenever I should find time and opportunity for paying them a visit.

Meanwhile, the school, which supported my dear mother and sisters, prospered, as any school conducted by Madeleine must have prospered. The first two years were anxious years certainly. They had a great number of applications, but very few brought any result, as people were fearful of committing their children to the charge of untried teachers. Madeleine's hopefulness never failed her in this season of doubt. She said she was glad to have difficulties at the outset, when they were full of strength and energy to meet them and trample them under foot; that it would be infinitely more trying to start with a good school and find the numbers fall off by degrees; that she preferred owing her popularity, if ever she became popular, to her own merits and industry, rather than to the recommendations of her friends. I think my mother and Susan would often have been tempted to despair if it had not been for Madeleine's high, fearless spirit, which seemed to surmount every obstacle, and take a pleasure in mastering difficulties. In time we began to see that perseverance, and the real

ability my sisters possessed, was taking effect, and their numbers slowly, but steadily increased.

Madeleine never married, although she had opportunities of doing so had she desired. She devoted herself to my mother, and when Susan married, which she did a short time before myself, Madeleine continued to carry on the school, which was large and prosperous, with the aid of some competent assistants.

For several years the arrangement by which it had been agreed that I should share my earnings with my mother was allowed to continue; and it was one of my greatest sources of happiness at that time, that I felt my exile from home was instrumental in alleviating the anxiety that was pressing heavily on my dear mother during the few years that Madeleine's efforts did not appear likely to meet with success. When, at length, the prospects of the school took a turn, and brought in a larger income than they had ever dared anticipate, my mother resolutely refused to accept any part of my earnings, in which refusal she was supported by Madeleine, and I was forced, unwillingly, to submit to the arrangement. I satisfied my mind, however, by always setting aside the sum that had formerly been sent home, and investing it, that if ever my mother's circumstances changed, it might be ready for her use; if not, as proved to be the case, I thought it would be a provision, or the beginning of a provision, for myself, in anticipation of the time when work would be less pleasing than I had hitherto found it.

I first met my husband during one of my visits home. He was a solicitor in the town where Madeleine started her school. I was well pleased to make his acquaintance in this way, rather than while occupied in my duties. We were engaged for some time, for Mr. Russell was a young man, and had to make his way through great difficulties before he could secure a certain income. It was a joyful day for all parties when we first returned home after our marriage, and it completed my dear mother's felicity when she had me settled within ten minutes' walk of her own home, and could pay me a daily visit.

And now, in few words, let me sum up the result of my experience as a governess. It cannot be denied, in the first place, that trials and humiliations are inseparable from the lot of a governess; but it is equally certain that their extent and duration depend in a great measure on herself. The more fully she bears in mind, and acts upon the knowledge, that she is a governess, the less acutely she

will feel the annoyances of the position, and the less will she be reminded of it by the manner of others. That the position is frequently ill-defined and incongruous to the birth and education of the person herself cannot be doubted; but, such as it is, it must be submitted to, and borne with patience and resignation. Above all things, I should say, that it was desirable that governesses should strive rather to "bear those ills they have, than fly to others that they know not of;" no family can be without certain drawbacks and failings, but if the governess leaves in the hope that in some other family she will be subjected to less discomfort, she will almost invariably be disappointed. She may not meet with the same trials, but she will probably find others quite as hard to bear; and should a spirit of restlessness, and a love of change grow upon her, it must inevitably make her unsettled and dissatisfied for the rest of her life. Under such circumstances she will make no permanent friends, nor will she meet with that respect, to which a person who has lived some years in one family is entitled.

In pursuing this subject I can but repeat much that I have already said, therefore I will conclude before I am tempted to become wearisome; only hoping that the simple detail of what one governess had to endure, and the line of conduct she found most advisable to pursue, both for her own comfort, the good of her pupils, and the interest of their parents, may prove some guide and assistance to others struggling on amidst equal, and perhaps greater difficulties; or may at least encourage them when they feel inclined to despair, by reminding them that others have also felt the same heart-loneliness and pining for affection and sympathy, which makes their lot so bitter.

I will close with two verses that have often brought me strength and consolation, when I have been feeling most sad and lonely:—

"There are who sigh that no fond heart is theirs,

None loves them best—Oh, vain and selfish sigh!

Out of the bosom of His love He spares—

The Father spares the Son, for thee ^{He} die:

For thee He died—for thee He lives again:

O'er thee He watches in His boundless reign.

"Thou art as much His care, as if beside

Nor man nor angel lived in heaven or earth:

Thus sunbeams pour alike their glorious tide

To light up worlds, or wake an insect's mirth:

They shine and shine with unexhausted store—

Thou art thy Saviour's darling—seek no more."

E. E. T.

From The National Magazine.

MY FIRST LOVE AND MY LAST.

BY EDWARD BRANTHWAYT.

I WAS young, very young, when I first joined the — Fusiliers. Young in years, for I was barely seventeen; young in experience, for I came almost direct from school.

Such is my opinion now, just ten years after that important period; but I held myself in very different estimation then. In fact, I looked upon myself as a knowing hand—a man of the world; and the pretension was based upon very sufficient grounds, as it seemed to me. I was an Etonian, and we were all men of the world, all of us at least in the sixth form. Then I had spent a season (or rather, part of it) in London, mixing in the most exclusive society, under the auspices of my uncle, Sir Charles Wilmington.

Before this visit I had seen little of my distinguished relation, though he was my guardian, for he rarely left Heiss-Baden, where he resided as a worthy representative of our little queen at the court of Saxe-Lilliput. So I had been in the habit of spending my vacations at the house of my other guardian, a quiet, country clergyman with several sons about my own age.

Once, indeed, I remember well, Sir Charles came to pay me a visit. He was staying at the castle, and drove over to Eton in one of the royal carriages with some prince of Saxe-Lilliput, who wished to see the college. I felt a little justifiable pride on the occasion, but to the credit of my schoolfellows, I must say, they did not appear very deeply impressed with a sense of my importance. In fact, I seemed to gain far more honor in their eyes by the sound thrashing I administered to young Hopkins, son of the radical member for Shodditon, on account of his sneers at the important treaty of Heiss-Baden, which won for my uncle his Grand Cross of the Bath.

Sir Charles happened to come to London on leave of absence (for the benefit of his health) after I was appointed to my regiment, and about a month before I had to join. Very good-naturedly, for it must have been a bore to the formal, punctilious old gentleman, he asked me to spend the intervening time with him, and I did not reject the offer.

He was very much sought after in society, so I could not have a better introduction to London life. Strange as it might appear, a genuine friendship sprang up between the merry, unsophisticated school-boy and the polished *russé* diplomatist. We were seen together everywhere (that was anywhere), and were far from being unnoticed. I was a pretty boy in those days, with a bright

face, fair, clustering curls, and laughing, blue eyes, while he was handsome and distinguished looking enough to be remarkable among the most high-bred in appearance of all aristocrats.

On one occasion, I remember, we overheard a speech of the lovely Countess Zalewski to a *compatriote*, in which she made most flattering allusion to "the flowers of spring and autumn's fruit." But my cousin, Jack Fortespee, who has his shaft tipped and winged for all comers, told me La Zalewski was a deep one, who displayed more calculation than giddiness in her flirtations. It was hinted, he said, that for "reasons of state," she had been making a dead set at my uncle for some months past, and that in fact she was the malady that had driven him from Heiss-Baden. If so, after the manner of most diseases, she had accompanied him in his flight.

Though I knew that my uncle had facilitated my entry into the exclusive circle in which we moved, I was by no means prepared to admit that I was altogether beholden to him for the welcome I met with. To say nothing of my personal qualities, which, of course, rendered me an ornament even to the most distinguished coterie, I had another passport, of great authority as I imagined in my dignity, as Wilmington of Wychholm. I had not then learned that fashion is a capricious deity, whose favor is not to be insured by either pure blood or a long rent-roll. Besides, such a term could not fairly be applied to my modest four thousand a year. Still I was right in some measure, for if I had been a penniless younger son, even at that tender age, prudent chaperons would not have allowed their fair charges so to pet and make much of "that dear little fellow, Harry Wilmington."

In spite of my uncle's sage counsels, I should have been utterly spoiled, but fortunately for me the time soon arrived for me to join my regiment.

"I might give you plenty of good advice," said Sir Charles the evening before I left him; "but it is a commodity that is never valued; and, like all young soldiers, you are beginning to feel a little superiority to us *Pekins*."

I protested warmly against his assumption, but he only smiled gently, as if unshaken in his opinion.

"I will give you what really will be of use," he said: "a letter to one of your captains, Brevet-major De Wilton, who is an old friend of mine. You will find him a thorough gentleman, a capital officer, and ready to give you advice or assistance in either capacity. He ought to have been a colonel or even general ere now, but howeat

on half-pay for several years, I believe. He lost his little fortune somehow through a friend he had trusted, and the lady he was about to marry jilted him in consequence. Since then his temper has been soured, but you will find his bark worse than his bite."

"People seem to think I am a regimental dry-nurse," muttered the veteran through his grizzled moustache in a very audible aside as I presented the missive to him.

"So my old friend Wilmington and you," he continued in a louder tone, "have been dancing on the Mayfair treadmill—he ought to know better at his time of life. I have heard of your doings from Lady Jane Garstin, who *will* write to me about that precious cub of hers. You will find the drill-yard poor work after the drawing-room, unless you have the right stuff in you. Well, be careful how you go on, for you shall not get into mischief for old Wilmington's sake, if a lecture from me can keep you out of it."

I will not dwell upon the few weeks during which I was shaking down into my place in the regiment, for there was nothing of any moment to relate. At first I have no doubt I gave myself ridiculous airs, for I was well quizzed, dubbed Lord Wychholm, etc., etc. But they soon found I took this bantering good-humoredly, and even let them laugh me out of my absurdities. I was always ready too to join in any fun going, and to enjoy it to the utmost. So I lost my nickname, and was speedily, in spite of my dignity, called "Harry" by every one, from the gray-haired colonel to the ensign, who joined a week after me.

I looked so young even for my age—such a mere child, and was so light-hearted and joyous, that every one seemed naturally to make much of me. From the fair creatures who had petted me in London I had no objection to this treatment, but from my brother officers it was hardly so welcome. It was useless, however, for me to show that my dignity was offended, for I only got laughed at for my pains.

Major de Wilton was no less friendly than the rest, if I was to take him at his own word and consider his lectures a proof of interest, for they were neither rare nor feeble. And in spite of his severity I really believe there was a mutual liking between us.

"Harry Wilmington," he said to me one morning, "you are going to Whitecliffe with me to-morrow. You know I relieve the company on detachment there, and I have persuaded the colonel to transfer you to my company. It will do you good to be quiet a little, instead of rattling about with the wild young fellows you are getting so thick with."

I was far from being pleased at this arrangement. I was piqued at the change being made so unceremoniously without reference to my wishes, and I was not inclined to leave our jovial set for a quiet little seaside town or rather village. But I consoled myself with two reflections. In the first place, I should not be separated from my chief crony, Garstin, and, in the second, the major's interference showed he was anxious to keep me with him. I even broached this opinion at mess that evening, when Jack Ponsonby twitted me with being exiled. Do Wilton's sharp ears caught my words, and I was more vexed than ever I had been at his lectures by the half-sneer on his lips as he said: "Yes, Master Harry, I could not live without you. I really ought to apologize to the mess for taking you from them."

Our life at Whitecliffe was certainly a contrast to that we had been leading at headquarters. The major, in spite of his good wishes, could not work us beyond a certain point without driving the men into a mutiny, so we had plenty of idle time on our hands. Aqua Vivariums had not then been invented, we were too unromantic for the sad sea waves to sing to us, and fishing from an old tub of a boat, or sitting on the beach making ducks and drakes on the water, lost their charms after a time.

Whitecliffe had a few years before been a mere fishing village, and the speculator, who had run up a few villas, had evidently deserted the place almost on the threshold of his scheme for a more promising site, for there were not a dozen in all of these triumphs of architecture. This was certainly not the season, if there was such an institution at Whitecliffe, and the two villas that were alone inhabited contained bipeds far below the notice of such exquisites as Garstin and I.

We *had* one or two visitors, but they did not contribute greatly to our entertainment. The officer of the coast-guard called upon us, but we never succeeded in finding him in his cottage—morning or evening he always seemed to be going his rounds. Then the clergyman made his appearance at the barracks after we had been at church the first Sunday; when by the by we had seen a slight, graceful girl sitting in what must have been the rectory pew. As on returning the civility we sat in the library of the worthy ancient, we caught a glimpse of the same slender form flitting about the garden, but he did not even refer to his daughter. We were rather gratified by the idea that we were looked upon as wolves, not to be trusted with the lamb.

One afternoon when we returned from ball-practice on the sands (with pistols at a

post) we found a card from Sir Walter Whinthorpe of Whinthorpe Park. This was before our grooms with our horses and my dog-cart had joined us, for we knew there was only a one-stalled stable near the little barracks, of which the major took possession. And even when later we had contrived the accommodation by knocking down the partition-wall of a hovel we rented, and so were able to drive over to Whinthorpe, we found nothing to repay us for the trouble. The baronet seemed an old bore, and his daughters were commonplace countrified girls. We afterwards learned that the belle of the family was staying with an aunt for the London market, for which, rightly enough, the others were not considered well suited. A day or two later we received a formal invitation to dinner after a fortnight's notice, so we were not likely to find the pleasures of society too absorbing.

But while we were still reduced to trudging on foot, I received a letter from my uncle, which changed the aspect of affairs. We corresponded occasionally, and I had written telling him of my being sent on detachment.

"So you are at Whitecliffe," he said; "I remember it of old, and, unless it has much changed, you must find it dull enough. You seem to have forgotten that you have near relations living in the neighborhood, the Clintons, who are your third cousins. I strongly recommend you to cultivate their acquaintance, for they are sure to have the best set in the county about them, and they have a splendid house and estate. Old Clinton is quite imbecile, I believe, but his youngest daughter (who, by the by, must be near forty now) has been mistress of the house for many years. She is one of those active, restless women, who always have some crotchet in their heads; last time I was there I could hardly touch a dish because they were all atrociously flavored with various herbs selected to counteract the bad qualities of the other ingredients. I give you my word of honor, I should have been half-starved, but for the eggs at breakfast and cheese and fruit at dinner. But probably she has dropped that whim for another time."

I had read so far to Garstin, when he exclaimed, "Why, Harry, you young muff, how came you to say nothing about your cousin? It will be glorious fun."

He was nearly three years older than I was, and sometimes gave himself absurd airs of superiority on the strength of his seniority both in age and regimental standing.

"What could I say, you wiseacre," I retorted, "when I never even heard of their existence till now?"

"Clinton," said Garstin, musingly, "it strikes me that is the name of the people who live in that fine house about two miles along the Farcombe road, but we were told they never visited the officers quartered here."

"Then that large curtained pew belongs to them!" I exclaimed. "I should like to have another look at those splendid dark eyes I caught a glimpse of."

"Whatever color you may persist in calling her eyes," returned Garstin, "I will maintain that I saw at the very same opening a cluster of curls like gold."

These incongruous charms, of which the waving of the curtain had allowed us a momentary view, had given us a strong desire to see more of the fair possessor. But when at last we had got our men out of the church, no one endowed with either beauty was to be seen.

"We will go and call upon them this very day!" I exclaimed. "I feel a very affectionate cousin just at present."

"No, no, you will have your trap here to-morrow," said Garstin. "Let us wait till then, and go in style. We will put Thunder and Lightning in, and rather astonish the natives."

Accordingly, the next day we started for our drive, in a neat but knowing turn-out, as I considered. Garstin and I, very soon after I joined, had fallen into the habit of putting our two horses into my dog-cart, and driving tandem about the country. We were the only subalterns (with the exception, of course, of the adjutant) who kept either horse or trap, and many a growl would old Do Wilton have at our doings in this as in other ways. We could afford it however, and risked our own limbs, not his, so his words did not carry much weight.

When we reached the park gates my groom jumped quickly down and opened them. As we dashed through I caught a glimpse of a bewildered-looking old dame standing at the door of the lodge, and making signals for us to stop. But Thunder and Lightning were very fresh after their want of work, and it was no joke to pull them up—besides, we were half-way to the Hall now, so on I went.

A quaint, white-headed old servant was brought to the door by our rather noisy summons.

"Are Mr. and Miss Clinton at home?" I asked, as I threw the reins to the groom ready to jump out.

"Yes, sir; but are you the officers from the barracks?" he asked in return, quietly examining us the while.

"Yes, and what of it?" I exclaimed, rather impatiently.

"We do not visit the officers," he replied gravely, as he retreated to close the door in our faces.

Complimentary to us professionally, certainly, but we could afford to laugh at it, as we were sure of gaining admittance at last.

"Stop!" I shouted, bringing the fellow to a dead halt; "here, take my card to Miss Clinton, and say it is her cousin, who is being kept on her door-step."

When he had calmly obeyed me, Garstin and I turned to one another, and indulged in a hearty laugh. We had not time to make our faces grave again, when the old fellow returned, and without a word threw open the door to admit us.

In the hall stood a lady with no pretension to youth, and hardly more to beauty, though her face was not altogether unpleasant. She was rather under the middle height, had a slight, wiry figure, and wore a costume, of which I will attempt no further description than that it appeared far better adapted for comfort than display. Though Garstin was nearer to her as we entered, her sharp, restless eyes rapidly passed from him to me.

"So you are my cousin Wilmington!" she exclaimed without a moment's hesitation: "I see you have a look of Sir Charles, but you are still more like your poor father. You are welcome to Belmont, as any of your name would be, but I fear you will find little attraction in the old house and its quiet inhabitants."

I had no lack of assurance in those days, being indeed far too well satisfied with myself to be troubled with any such feelings, and while we followed Miss Clinton to the drawing-room I had volubly replied, expressing my pleasure at making the acquaintance of relations of whom I had heard my uncle speak so highly, concluding by introducing "my brother officer and especial friend, Mr. Garstin."

I quickly found I had not said more than would be borne out by the facts. On entering the rather gloomy sitting-room, dark with old oak furniture and wainscoting, we saw two girls sitting in the most cheery spot, the fine oriel window looking into the terraced garden. The mystery of the curtained pew was cleared up as we might have divined—two fair damsels had been bending over the same prayer-book, for here were the splendid dark eyes; here were the tresses of gold.

Yet my cousin talked of our finding little attraction in the old house!

The introductions, which now took place, gave me still further cause for satisfaction.

"Clara, this is your cousin, Henry Wilmington—you and Ella must be cousins,

too, but rather far away. Mr. Garstin—Miss Clancy, and Miss Singleton."

As I sat talking to Miss Clinton of the doings of my uncle and myself, I envied Garstin, who had pounced upon the chair next to Clara Singleton, and in a few minutes was making her blue eyes sparkle and the curls which he so admired dance, as she laughed merrily at his droll description of our past experiences of life at Whitecliffe. But when Ella Clancy struck in with a remark on the long time that had elapsed since she last saw Sir Charles Wilmington, and continued to take part in our conversation, I was quite satisfied.

I now remembered that my uncle, who had often spoken of the Clintons, had also mentioned, as wards of the old gentleman and relations of our own, two Miss Clancys, who were coheiresses of large fortune. But I could call nothing further to mind, for I rarely paid due attention to these genealogical details in which my uncle was rather fond of indulging.

Miss Clinton I soon saw was no less eccentric now than she had appeared formerly to Sir Charles. Her remarks were as sharp and telling as a Minie rifle bullet, and the rapid gestures with which her words were accompanied, forcibly illustrated her meaning, which they were not needed to explain. And all the time her small, restless black eyes were wandering about, taking in every thing within their range.

Presently I noticed, that even while talking to me and Ella Clancy, a pencil held with apparent carelessness in her hand was moving slowly over a half-completed embroidery pattern on the table near her. This naturally attracted my attention, and I read in quaint and irregular, but very distinct characters, "They are worthy."

I suppose my face expressed my surprise, for my cousin Clara Singleton laughed openly but good-naturedly at me. This was not lost upon Miss Clinton, as indeed what was? and she shook her pencil with a mock menace at Clara, while turning to Garstin and me, she asked us to dine with them next day.

Such an offer was not to be declined, and having eagerly accepted we rose to take leave. But before we went I asked if Mr. Clinton was not able to see visitors. A look of sorrow sat quaintly upon Miss Clinton's rather harsh features as she replied, "No, he is forbidden the least excitement, and the sight could only be painful to you."

"Is she not beautiful?" I exclaimed to Garstin, as we drove off.

"Angelie!" returned Garstin as warmly; "did you ever see such eyes? This sky is not a purer blue, and as for her hair—"

"Stuff!" I interrupted: "her eyes are gray, but they look violet in the shadow of those splendid lashes like a limpid mountain-moore in the shade of overhanging cliffs."

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed Garstin: "I was talking of Clara Singleton, while you are thinking of your other cousin. I can't say I admire her moon face—and grenadiers in petticoats are not to my taste."

"Taste? you have none!" I retorted sharply; "as for Clara, you could buy a doll as pretty and I dare say about as sensible in the Lowther Arcade for half a crown."

"So be it," said Garstin. "Don't let us get angry about it, for it is the best arrangement possible. You admire one and I the other, so we shall not get in each other's way."

Though still rather huffy, I acquiesced in silence, for this view of the case was too satisfactory for me to oppose it. Besides, I was obliged to admit that his criticisms had some foundation. Ella had a fuller face than a sculptor would have chiselled for his ideal in the palmy days of Greek art, and she was decidedly above the common height, being taller than myself. But, as Garstin rather maliciously suggested on another occasion, this disparity was diminishing daily, for I had not yet ceased to grow.

Perhaps I cannot give a better idea of her than by saying I am often reminded forcibly of her by Leech's beauties. She had however more dignity, and at the same time more fun in her expression, which sounds like a contradiction, but that is often the case with truth. What I admired most in her were her splendid eyes, which sometimes sparkled with frolicsome glee, at others beamed with a soft, gentle light, and I could well fancy them melting with tenderness.

Our first dinner at Belmont passed off satisfactorily enough. My uncle was right in supposing Miss Clinton would have given up the old whim which had so punished him, and our fare was all that we could desire.

The acquaintance thus begun was quickly improved by Garstin and myself. We fell at once into habits of intimacy, becoming quite at home in the house, where indeed we spent a considerable portion of our time.

This did not escape the major's attention, and one day he suddenly asked us if "we were not making fools of ourselves with our petticoat hunting?"

"Oh, no!" answered Garstin with a laugh: "we are quite safe. That is, I can answer for myself—Clara and I understand one another, and are only having a bout with the foils to keep our hands in. As for Harry, I suspect he is fencing with the buttons off, and he is hard hit already, or I don't know the symptoms."

"I noticed the youngster was off his feed," said De Wilton with grim jocularity: "and he evidently did not know his right hand from his left on parade this morning. This is getting serious. I suppose you are going to Belmont as soon as you have swallowed your lunch—take me with you, and I will judge for myself."

Of course, I made no objection, though I felt far from grateful for his supervision.

"Well, there is more excuse for you than I expected," said De Wilton as we left the hall; "if you *must* fancy yourself in love she is as good an object as you are likely to find. But as for any thing more, you may as well cry for the moon for a plaything—you would have just as much chance of getting her."

"I want nothing," I replied pettishly, "but to be on friendly terms with my cousin. If I did aim further I should not take your warning. Though she is an heiress, I am a fair match for her by birth and fortune, and as for myself personally, she seems to find nothing to *dislike* in me."

"Bravo! my boy!" he said, with that sneering laugh of his which I so hated; "you fancy she is in love with you, do you? Why, she looks upon you as a child, and not far wrong either."

In spite of my denial, I was obliged to own to myself that Garstin was right. I was hard hit indeed.

She certainly was worthy of any love I could bestow upon her, and I was continually brought in contact with her. Miss Clinton was so restlessly active, that she nearly always had some business to take her from us, and her father, his mind prostrated by softening of the brain, vegetated rather than lived, being wheeled to and from his own suite of rooms and a sunny corner of the old-fashioned walled garden. So Garstin and I were left to the society of Ella and Clara, which was pleasant but decidedly dangerous.

Garstin and Clara were well matched. They laughed and jested or sentimentalized together, as the mood took them—flirted, in short, with the perfect understanding that nothing but their mutual amusement was intended. And Ella and I were on equally good terms—better indeed, as I flattered myself, for it was "Harry" and "Ella" with us, and she made no pretence of concealing her liking for me. So I rejoiced at my progress in her good graces, deluding myself in a way which only my extreme youth could have accounted for. But even then I should have known that her familiar kindness was a bad sign for me.

It was not self-conceit that made me believe in her fondness for me—it existed with-

out doubt. Even when she scolded me for my high-flown speeches or laughed at my positively troublesome assiduities, there was a kindly interest in tone and manner, which made my smitten heart beat wildly. She had a warm, loving disposition, which forbade her to shut up her heart with cold indifference, and my very evident devotion could not have been displeasing to her. Her seniority of three or four years and the relationship between us, warranted her, she thought, in displaying her liking for me, so she spoilt and petted me to her and my heart's content.

It may seem strange to some that I should set my heart upon one so much older than myself; but it is January who has a passion for May. Often a lad's first and not least violent *tendresse* is for a woman almost old enough to be his mother.

After a time I noticed that Miss Clinton kept an eye upon me, or rather I mean she gave me an undue share of her attention, for her eyes were upon every thing by turns. One evidence of her watchfulness afforded considerable amusement to Garstin and Clara at least. Such was her interest in our welfare, that she had recourse to spiritual agency to throw some light upon the future. But I must explain.

I had not been long free of the house when I noticed that any surface adapted for writing was often covered with the same irregular scrawl (very different from Miss Clinton's usual rapid but neat hand), which had appeared so strange to me on my first visit. I soon asked what this could mean, when Clara willingly enlightened my ignorance with her almost constant merriment, which always reminded me of a chime of bells, a delicious melody for a time, but apt to pall upon one's ear.

Miss Clinton, she said, had a strong belief in the power of spirits to make themselves manifest to us in various ways. But of all their methods of carrying on this communication one was by far the most singular. When she had some doubt to remove she sat with a pencil in her hand, which she abandoned to the impulse of a spirit, who caused it to write the required answer. Thus it was the assertion of our worthiness that insured us our first invitation to dine at Belmont.

Ella would not join in our laughter, for though she gave no credence to Miss Clinton's marvels, she said we knew too little of the spiritual world and its manifestations to jest on the subject, to which it seemed to her much reverence was due. I talked the matter over with her alone one day, and obtained further particulars—Miss Clinton was remaining single entirely from her own choice.

Nearly twenty years ago she had been engaged to the young rector of the parish, who was carried off by a fever caught by the side of a death-bed. This lover it was whom she believed to communicate with her.

"I think," said Ella, "it is the delusion of an over-active and over-worked brain, but I can hardly regret it, for it is a great consolation to her."

One morning I had given Ella some music, and in the evening we found scrawled across it: "Do not fear. They will both be happy 'All's well that ends well.'" There was no doubt of the application, for Miss Clinton, having her mind set at rest, no longer troubled herself to watch me and Ella.

How Garstin and Clara laughed and twitted me with having thus disturbed the repose of Shakespeare. And Garstin must needs take it to the barracks, where I got a similar roasting from the major.

I would not have owned it for the world, but from this time I began to think there might be a little more in this spirit-writing than we were at first inclined to allow. Who would be bold enough to say what was possible or impossible, when life itself was an unfathomable mystery?

One morning as we sat at breakfast, De Wilton threw a letter across the table to us.

"Read that, and then be off to your lady-loves," he said; "what red eyes there will be."

It was a letter from our colonel containing the unexpected intelligence that the regiment had received orders to hold itself in readiness to sail for the Cape, where those amiable Dutchmen were stirring up one of their favorite Caffre wars, to enable them to find a profitable market for their cattle. They would be less warlike, I fancy, if they had to provide the money and blood as well as the beef.

I was hardly so pleased as I thought it necessary to appear, for really there was little glory to be gained, and the idea of leaving Whitecliffe was terrible. But my mind was soon set at rest, for next day came news that the major and Garstin were to go with the service companies, but that I was to remain with the *dépôt*, which would probably be stationed at Whitecliffe.

We went up to Belmont full of this news, which caused some sensation. Garstin and Clara got up a little burlesque sentiment for the occasion, but neither of them seemed in despair. However, it was settled that, as it might be his last day with us, we must both return and dine at Belmont, for we were too busy to stay.

On entering the drawing-room we found a stranger there, a military man evidently, of about thirty. I was surprised when Miss

Clinton introduced him as Captain Merrivale, for I recognized the name as that of Ella's guardian, who was expected down for her twenty-first birthday (the very next morning, by the by), on some business, I suppose, connected with her coming of age. I had anticipated seeing a far older man, and certainly he was full young for the responsible office.

Ere the evening was over I thought him better fitted for it—in the first place thirty was, on second thoughts, a tolerably mature age, and in the second place he was steady and grave enough to be a hundred. He was decidedly silent and reserved, and had a peculiarly quiet, even manner. But this evidently was not the calm of insensibility—twice that evening I saw his eyes flash, once as he described in a few words some plucky action of De Wilton's, whom, it seemed, he knew, and again while he listened to an account of a cowardly attack by a crusty farmer on a pilfering schoolboy he had caught in his orchard. There was little tameness of spirit or coldness of heart in him I imagined, though he made no parade of his feelings.

But in spite of the fancy I had taken to Captain Merrivale, I gave him very little of my attention that evening. The narrow escape I had had of being separated from Ella made me feel more infatuated than ever, and she was looking lovely enough to excuse any amount of folly.

How joyfully my heart beat when I fancied that something similar must be passing in her own mind. Yes, there was a change in her, which could not be overlooked.—There was a glow upon her smooth cheek, a softness in her eyes, a sweet gentleness and even timidity in her manner, which I knew must be—love. And was it strange that I should feel sure, it was I who was so blessed? Nothing was said to cause my conviction, indeed, she was unusually silent, but her sweet smile shone upon me, and there was a tender light in her beautiful eyes, as they met mine, which filled me with rapture.

All that night I was in a fever, a delirium of happiness. But amid the vagaries of fancy one idea took full possession of my mind,—that the next day should make my glorious hopes a still more glorious certainty.

In the morning inexorable duty chained me, and it was late before I could get to the Hall. But I forgot any vexation when I saw Ella sitting in a summer-house in the garden waiting for some one—was it not for me?

She started as she heard my footstep, and looked up still with that soft, almost loving look. She blushed, too, and the sight dispersed to the winds my little remaining self-

control, so that, casting aside my studied introduction, I plunged into the midst, pouring out an absurd rhapsody which I could not now recall to save my life, and certainly would not pen if I could.

What words she used I know not, for I felt stunned by them, but somehow she made me understand that she did not love me, that she was even engaged to another.

"Why did you not tell me so when you saw my growing love?" I raved. "I owe the misery of my life to you. But doubtless with all the heartlessness of a coquette you rejoice in your work."

I can give no better idea of her kindness of heart than by stating the simple fact that she did not laugh in my face on hearing this tirade.

"I could not tell you," she said; "for Captain Merrivale did not ask my hand till this morning. He was my guardian."

I learned at a later period, when I was more disposed to do justice to him, that though he loved her and knew her heart was his, he had never even spoken of his affection till he had given an account of his stewardship, and had relinquished all control over her actions. His father, old Admiral Merrivale, Ella's original guardian, exercising the power given to him by Mr. Claney, had by his will appointed his son to succeed him in this office. So Captain Merrivale had authority to sanction or forbid any engagement, and he had shrunk from taking the slightest advantage which his position towards her gave him.

With the greatest kindness and patience she soothed me, frankly owning her cousinly liking for me, and, as I became calm, giving me that good advice, which we take more readily from the lips of a young and pretty woman than of any man, and allow greater weight. Not that I paid much heed to her counsels at the time, but afterwards I recalled them to memory, and I feel that I am a wiser and better man for having acted in some degree in accordance with them.

She saw that I was overcoming my excitement, and fancying that my feelings were of no great depth, thought she might venture on a little bantering, hoping perhaps to cheer me by it.

"If we could have married," she said, "you would have lived to repent it. Why, I shall be an old woman while you are in your prime. I have a sister ten years younger than myself, and she will be of a more suitable age. They say she is growing very like me, so if your taste does not change she will do admirably for you six or seven years hence."

"You may laugh at me and call me a boy," I replied; "but my love for you is as great

any man's could be, and you will see it will not quickly change. I could not bear to stay here and see you making another so happy. I shall volunteer to go to the Cape at once."

Garstin was delighted to hear of my resolve, and De Wilton showed his approval by strongly backing my application, which was acceded to.

Ella's kindness and sympathy softened the pain of our parting, but after that came a weary time, when I felt there was little pleasure left for me in life, though I was only standing on the threshold. It was, I thought, an incurable wound, for I knew not the renovating powers of Nature.

Soon after landing, constant occupation came to my relief, for we had a full share of the fighting. In one skirmish I got a Caffre spear through my arm, and another in my side, inflicting severe but not dangerous wounds.

I was still on my back from the effects of these when a letter was put into my hand. I recognized the handwriting, and my old love-fever returned as I tore open the envelope.

With a sharp pang I read the contents:

"Belvale Abbey."

"Dear Cousin Harry,

"I should not like you to have heard of my marriage till I told you of it myself. I can assure you I felt proud of my cousin, when I heard of your gallant conduct, which is rewarded as it deserves, for with this mail you will get the Gazette with your appointment as Lieutenant to the Rifles. I trust, however, you are not too rash—do not be foolish, and risk your life unnecessarily.

"When you return to England covered with laurels, you may reckon upon a warm welcome at Belvale Abbey. And whether at home or abroad, you will always have the best wishes of

"Your affectionate cousin and friend,

ELLA."

So it was over. Her very signature, intended to spare my feelings, galled me, for how ought that blank to be filled up?

By the rules of the service I should now have gone home to the Depot of the Rifles, but as soon as my wounds were sufficiently healed, I easily obtained leave to join the service companies in India. I was not yet prepared to look with tranquillity upon her happiness with another.

Now came several years of cantonments—then followed the campaign of the Punjab, where I had something worse than Caffre spears to contend against.

Nearly nine years had elapsed since I left Whitecliffe, when I set sail with my regiment for England. Time and constant occupation had done their work. I still cherished a

warm affection for Ella, but I looked back to those bygone days with pleasure rather than pain, and I felt I could now enjoy her friendship.

But would it still be offered to me? That was a question which I put to myself with considerable anxiety. My uncle was dead; I had no near relations, and my former friends were scattered over the face of the earth. It was hardly like coming home.

But the very day after we had landed my doubts were removed, for I received a warm invitation from Ella, or rather an imperious command, to present myself at Belvale Abbey without delay. Gladly I obeyed, and as soon as I could get leave of absence I hurried off to Belvale.

When I arrived the servant told me that Captain and Mrs. Merrivale were out, but that they had been prepared for me since yesterday. Being ushered into the drawing-room, I sat awaiting their return, not without impatience, but with tolerable content. The mere home air of every thing was delightful after my exile; the scattered books, the open pianoforte, and half-finished fancy work.

But what pleased me most was to perceive, framed on the wall, a sketch in water colors of myself, done in the old Whitecliffe days by Clara Singleton, who had a knack of taking likenesses. So they liked me well enough to value my portrait.

Presently the door opened, and I started in amazement. For there entered in walking dress the very image of Ella, the same full but graceful form, the same lovely face, and splendid deep gray eyes.

Involuntarily I exclaimed, "Ella!"

With the same frank smile, and the same silvery tones, she replied: "My name is Evelyn—Ella is following me. You must have known her years ago. Can you be—but no, you are so unlike."

She glanced with a look of perplexity from me to my youthful portrait.

Before I could explain in came—this time really—Ella, much changed, of course, more matronly looking, but hardly less handsome.

It was for a moment only that she was puzzled; then she sprang forward with an exclamation of "Cousin Harry! Ah! I am so glad!" and gave me a cousinly kiss.

"But how you are altered!" she said: "yes, and improved. Why you really are taller than me now. Such a moustache and whiskers too, and plenty of tan. And that white seam makes you look quite handsome. Why, you are hardly like your former self. Of course, Evelyn could not recognize you from your old portrait, as she expected to do."

Then in a gay whisper she added: "I

have kept her for you as I promised. Will she not do?"

"Take care, or I shall be jealous," cried cheerily Captain Merrivale, now grown a stout country gentleman, a model farmer, and J. P.

"No need," said his wife; "I hand him over to Evelyn's tender mercies. Do not be too hard upon him, my dear."

How shall I conclude my history? I cannot find words for it.

I will only say this—that my three months' leave is just up, and I am still staying here at Belvale Abbey. Indeed, I positively cannot tear myself away, so I have sent in my papers to sell.

And the magnet that has this power over me?

She is now sitting by my side—my beautiful, darling Evelyn.

Yes mine—mine already as far as her promise and the feelings of her own heart can make her mine; but to be still more completely my own ere long. For due weight has been given to my argument, that if I have only known Evelyn three months, I have loved her for ten years, and my time of probation is to be short. And even now my happiness is almost perfect in the companionship of my first love and my last.